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# **LETTERS**

OF

## **WILLIAM LEE,**

SHERIFF AND ALDERMAN OF LONDON; COMMERCIAL AGENT  
OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS IN FRANCE; AND MIN-  
ISTER TO THE COURTS OF VIENNA AND BERLIN.

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**1766-1783.**

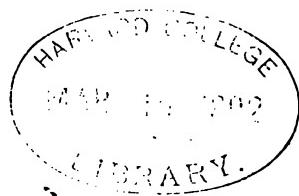
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TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

4 February, 1778.

*My dear Brother:*

Mr. Thos. Morris died at Nantes the 31st ulto. The inclosed letter will tell that I am waiting for an order from Court to put me in possession of his papers, which are sealed up by the king's officer agreeable to y<sup>e</sup> laws of this country in case of the death of a stranger.\* I shall before I leave this appoint proper persons in y<sup>e</sup> different parts to receive and dispose of any cargoes or property that may arrive in any port on account of the public.

---

\* "Feb. 2d. The Commissioners received an account from Mr. Ross, at Nantes, that Mr. T. Morris was at the point of death, and if that happened his papers would be seized by the officers of the crown. Mr. Lee went with his brother to Versailles, to get an order for the delivery of the papers which concerned the public business, to the other commercial agent. M. Gérard said this would be done with all possible expedition, if the commissioners would present a small memorial for it to the minister."

"3d. Mr. L. drew up a *mémoire*, desiring an order for the delivery of Mr. Morris's papers to Mr. W. Lee, the other commercial agent, which the other commissioners signed. On the 4th, Mr. W. L. waited upon Mr. Gérard with the *mémoire*, and he promised to expedite it with all possible despatch." *Arthur Lee's Diary.*

This arrangement when made I shall give the committee a particular account of that they may confirm or alter as they think proper: but if they should think of appointing any other commercial agent before they hear from me again you can't I think at present do better than endeavor to get Mr. John Lloyd of South Carolina appointed who is now at Nantes. I fancy a South gentleman, a Mr. John Ross, who is here from Philadelphia, will endeavor to get the appointment thro' Mr. R[obert] Morris]. I have for my own part many solid objections to such an appointment which I have not time to mention now, but I hope it will not take place. Our business is not yet finally settled yet at this court, but so near it that I hope nothing will prevent the conclusion, as everything is written fairly and agreed, only remains to sign and seal. Everything is settled in G[ermany], where there will not be any war. The King of Prussia's minister has written that his M[ajest]y will acknowledge the Independence of the United States as soon as France has done so. In England the king has determined to pursue his utter ruin, and every exertion is made by ye M[inisterialists], Jac[obins], Tor[ies] and Scot[chme]n to procure men for another campaign, which you ought to provide for with your utmost vigor, and with this confidence that it will assuredly be the last unless your armies should everywhere be cut

to pieces, and totally dispersed, which I think is too improbable to be even supposed.\*

The uneasinesses and bickerings that have been on this side begin to subside, and I believe will soon totally vanish, as the principal fomenter, Mr. C[arinichael] is now on his way to America. It is inconceivable the mischief this man has been the cause of by telling untruths from one to another, whispering and insinuating what never happened or was said, and a thousand other little artifices, for no end that I conceive but a natural delight in mischief. If he will give from under his hand plain and specific charges against any one, it may perhaps be worth attention; but otherways what is said in dubious terms or whispered, should be totally disregarded. This would be my advice even if he was to attempt a charge against a man I have the worst opinion of. I can't omit advising you never to be in his company alone.

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

NANTES, 13 February, 1778.

*My dear Sir:*

I have been two daies with the King's order to get possession of Mr. Thos. Morris's Papers, that I may be able to make some settlement of the public

---

\* Lord Dunmore had proposed to the king to raise four regiments of Scotch and to be appointed Colonel himself. The ministry talked of sending 26,000 men to America.

affairs that have been in his hands before I go to Vienna, for which place I should have set out by this time, had not the death of Mr. Morris obliged me to come down here to put the public concerns under some regulations first."

As soon as everything is regulated I shall give the Secret Committee a full account of the whole; but in the meantime I must advise you, that there is here a Scotchman, named John Ross, who has taken upon himself to forbid Mr. Penet, that with Mr. James Gruel, has managed here all the public business, which was addressed to Mr. Morris,) to give me any public accounts, or to come to any settlement with me.

This is the more unwarrantable in him, as he knows how difficult it will be, without any interruption, to get those accounts settled with Mr. Gruel and Penet; and the more insufferable, as he has no kind of authority whatsoever for such conduct, the whole of which shall be fully stated to the Committee. He gives it out here that he expects to be appointed Commercial Agent, probably

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\* On Morris' death, it was represented to the Commissioners that Penet, on the plea of some partnership with Morris, might claim his papers. It was, therefore, thought best for William Lee to go to Nantes, armed with an order from the King, to receive the papers, and to deliver to Ross such of them as might relate to the operations of Willing and Morris. Lee quarreled with Ross and brought the whole trunk of papers to Paris.

thro' the interest of Mr. Rob<sup>t</sup> Morris, whom he calls his friend; but I shall think it passing strange indeed if America was to choose a person, for such a very confidential and important trust, from that country whose natives have been assuredly the cause of all her most grievous miseries and sufferings.\* \* \* \*

You will probably hear before this gets to hand of the full Alliance made between you and this Country, on which I congratulate you, as our Independence is now firmly established, and probably the Internal war with you at an end; but I count it as an absolute certainty that, at the utmost, it can't last this year out, because a war between this Country with Spain against G. Britain is inevitable. Peace, here, cannot continue above two months, perhaps, not as many weeks.

Cap<sup>t</sup> Young of the Independence, is still here tho' his dispatches were sent from Paris, the 1st Dec<sup>r</sup>. What has detained him so long, I cannot learn from any one, but I shall not be surprised, if he and Mr. T. M[orris] in his letters should lay the blame on me, tho' I was away from hence the whole time. When he arrived I was here, and put the repairs and outfit of his vessel under the care of M<sup>r</sup> Schweighauser, who had funds in his hands sufficient for the purpose, if they had been properly conducted. M<sup>r</sup> Morris and Capt<sup>n</sup> Young were then both absent, and when I went to Paris in con-

sequence of my appointment, every thing was going on very well. On their return they threw everything into confusion, and Captain Young wrote to me repeatedly, that he would not follow my orders, nor would he have anything to do with M<sup>r</sup> Schweighauser. He also told the same to M<sup>r</sup> Lee, who was acting in M<sup>r</sup> Schweighauser's Counting House.\* If you should not now be of the Committee, I hope you will take care to possess fully some proper member with these facts.

There is one part of the Treaty of Commerce which I do not by any means approve; but I would not say a word on the subject that in any manner might create contention, as on the whole we may esteem ourselves well off, were I not convinced that the ministry will alter it, if the Congress, tho' confirming what is done, should order the Commissioners to represent that they think that part not equal. It is, I think, the 12<sup>th</sup> article where 'tis engaged, that no duties shall be laid on anything exported *from* the United States to the West Indies, in consideration of no duties being laid on Molasses

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\* "Mr. Lee's Nephew, a son of the honorable Richard Henry Lee, is in the house of Mons. Schweighauser, at Nantes, as a clerk or as a partner—I am informed the latter. Commercial affaires and the disposition of prizes are put into the care of this house, while a near connection of Mr. Schweighauser, at Guernsey, or Jersey, is employing himself in sending out cruisers on our commerce." *Deane to the President of Congress, 12 October, 1778.*

only exported *to* the United States. This latter part was directed by Congress to be asked, but in their Instructions they desire it to be given up, rather than that it should impede the Treaty. When 'twas asked, the ministry, at first, said it was a thing they never intended to do, as they could not lay any impediment in the way of exporting Molasses, without altering the whole system they had established for regulating the commerce of their Islands; but afterwards, they proposed as an equivalent that no duties should be imposed on Tobacco exported to France. Some of the Commissioners then proposed the equivalent as it now stands; this the three were not unanimous in, when one \* proposed that the opinion of M<sup>r</sup> Izard and myself should be asked on this point, as we were both in Paris; this the other two would not agree to—when the dissentient conformed to the majority rather than create a difference or any disturbance, at so critical a moment. †

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\* Arthur Lee.

† This is not a true statement of this incident. The thirteenth article of the treaty proposed by Congress, exempting from all duties molasses purchased by Americans in the French islands, was considered by Gérard an unequal stipulation; and to remedy this defect the XI<sup>th</sup> and XII<sup>th</sup> articles were framed. The first conceded the exemption of molasses from duties, and the XII<sup>th</sup> stipulated that no duties should be imposed on merchandise exported from the States for the use of the French islands. The Commissioners unanimously agreed to accept these articles, but

My late letters from London say, "the raising of men goes on very slowly in Great Britain; we shall not send many to America this year; but we shall block up their Ports, and carry on the war by sea, for we cannot give up our Sovereignty."

If this was the case before they knew what has been done here, you may easily judge how things will go, when they come to be informed of this decisive blow against them.

The paper sent will shew how the minority has

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almost immediately after, Arthur Lee conceived some doubt of their expediency, and wrote to Franklin and Deane to prevent their being embodied in the completed treaty. Though not recognizing the mischievous consequences that Lee attributed to the 12th article, Franklin and Deane gave Lee a letter to Gérard, requesting the omission of the two articles, a letter which was delivered by Lee in person. "Mr. Lee discoursed on the subject with M. Gérard, who satisfied him, as he thought at the time, and as we all then thought, of the impropriety of making any alteration in the treaty after it had been so maturely considered; had been fully agreed upon by us all; had been approved of in form by his Majesty, and ordered to be transcribed and signed. Neither Mr. William Lee nor Mr. Izard ever spoke one word to me on the subject; and I did not think myself authorized or at liberty to consult them or any other person on the subject but my colleagues." *Silas Deane to the President of Congress, 12 October, 1778.* See *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, I, 470-473. *Life of Arthur Lee*, I., 383 *et seq.* Lee forwarded his objections to Congress, and it was from thence that Franklin first learned of their having been sent. *Franklin's Works*, VI., 200, 201.

increased of late,—it never voted on any question for 4 years past above 105, and on American questions before, not so high as 90, and now you see, they amount to 165.\*

You know best what remittances the Committee has put into the hands of Mr. John Ross. I know he received from the Commissioners here, at least

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\* "The foundations of the North Ministry were sapped by the unfortunate turn of the American war. Their majorities in both Houses indeed continued large; but the country party began to hesitate in their support of this ruinous contest, to look with some dismay on increasing taxation, and to distrust the abilities or the honesty of the present rulers." *Donne*, II, 127. On February 2, Fox introduced a motion on the "State of the Nation," and in a speech of two hours and forty minutes described the misconduct of the war. "I went over the whole of the American business, and I really thought the House went a good deal with me in the most of it . . . We had several Tories with us, and I really think it was a great day for us. The ministry, not by concert, but, I believe, by accident, did not say one word, which scandalised even their own friends a good deal, as I had opened the affairs so very fully. They now pretend to say that Ellis and Wedderburne were up (I did not see them), and, while they were complimenting one another, the question was put. The fact is, that it is such a cause as no man can defend well, and therefore nobody likes to attempt it." *Correspondence of Charles James Fox*, I, 168. The division stood 169 to 259—a surprise to the minority. "I trust," wrote the King to North, "that when next the Committee on the State of the Nation is resumed, gentlemen will be more ready to speak." North was eager to resign, and only remained to gratify the urgency of the King. On February 17th, North introduced his measures for conciliating the Colonies.

£20,000 sterling above 5 months ago, to purchase goods for the Congress. You ought to know whether he has sent those goods or not.

I wish the Secret Committee would attend more to business as a Body; for the Congress never could intend that any *one* should do the whole, or they would not have appointed a Committee, but have left it to one.

The Commissioners here, about 7 days ago, have given Mr. Izard and myself, each 2,000 Louis d'ors to support our Embassies, of which I shall inform the Secret Committee, to whom I had before wrote, that I should keep what money I had in my hands, belonging to them, to bear my expenses in Germany. Still it would be well for Mr. Izard and myself to have some authority in future to call on the Commissioners here for the funds to support our expenses, at least.

There are 50,000 land forces ordered into Normandy and Brittany on the coast opposite to England; most of them are already there, and while they continue, you need not fear that any more men will be sent to America. Thom. and Lud-well, and all your connections here, are well. Best love and wishes attend you and yours, and Loudoun and his. Adieu.

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

NANTES, 15 February, 1778.

*My dear Sir:*

I before informed you by Mr. Stevenson, that it was agreed here to make Dunkirk, L'Orient, Bayonne, and Marseilles free ports for the admission of American vessels and produce of all kinds, duty free; and as France is to be allowed to appoint Consuls in the different American ports, to take care of the rights of the French Commerce, and America is to be allowed the same privilege here, I presume Congress will appoint Consuls at all the above free ports; in which case I wish much you could get Mr. Edward Browne, my former partner, appointed the Consul at L'Orient, or Dunkirk, (the former, viz.: L'Orient, I should prefer,) because I certainly know his capability for such an office, and his sincere attachment to our general Cause. If he is appointed, I will exert myself to get him established as a respectable house there and put Tom: in partnership with him, which, in my opinion, will be as happy and independent a situation for Tom: as can be wished.

With respect to the affairs at Green Spring, in general they must be left with you to act as you see best.

I wish particular attention may be paid to rearing young Negroes, and taking care of those grown up, that the number may be increased as much as

possible; also putting several of the most promising and ingenious lads apprentices to different trades; such as carpenters, coopers, wheelwrights, sawyers, shipwrights, bricklayers, plasterers, shoemakers and blacksmiths; some women also should be taught to weave.

The planting of white mulberry trees should not by any means be neglected; the corners of the panels of the fences, round all the fields, will be proper places.

If ever I return, the culture of silk will be my principal object; which I am morally certain will succeed even to the most sanguine expectations. No doubt care will be taken to receive the interest regularly of such money as may be placed in the Continental Loan office, and by adding it to the Principal increase the Capital fund. If the estate of the late Hon<sup>ble</sup> P. L. L.\* is in a condition to pay off the legacy, which now amounts to upwards of £2,500 stg, that may be placed in the Continental Loan office.

Every good attend you, I sincerely pray, and remain most affectionately

Yours &c.,

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\* Philip Ludwell Lee.

TO JOHN LLOYD.

CHAILLOT, 25 February, 1778.

*Sir:*

I had the good fortune to bring the trunk\* with me here, sealed as you left it. The officers had more civility than a Scotchman [Ross], for they took my word for the contents, and let it pass untouched; if therefore, you and Mr. Blake have no objection, I shall be obliged to you for transmitting me a certificate stating on such a day at my request, you went with me to the public office of Monsieur Delicpore, avocat au Parlement et Greffier en chef de le Présidial de Nantes, where a trunk containing the papers of the late Mr. Thos. Morris was opened, and upon being examined by Mons<sup>t</sup> Delicpore and compared with the record he had before made of them, he found they were the same as when delivered to me; after which, they were all put again in the same trunk, which was locked and sealed by you and left in my possession. If Mr. R—d† was willing, he could not with propriety sign this, because he was not present at the last sealing, nor is his name on y<sup>e</sup> paper attached to y<sup>e</sup> trunk. I must beg your answer as soon as possible, because my stay here will not be long.

Nothing is yet settled about the appointment,

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\* Of Thomas Morris' papers.

† Perhaps a misreading for Ross.

though I have mentioned my plan, which you know, to the several commissioners, to which no reply has been made; some arrangement, however, shall be made in a few daies. Dr. F., indeed, I tho't did not seem displeased at the plan; but he replied, that he tho't it was business in which I had the sole authority to act as I tho't proper, and that the Commissioners had nothing to do with it. I knew that as well as him, but at the same time would wish to act so as to meet the approbation of all parties.\*

There seems to be nothing but confusion in England. The King and his ministers are as distracted as it is possible to conceive. Their rage for revenge and the utter incapability of gratifying it cannot be so well expressed in words, as Cibber has done it in the excellent representation of a raving madman over the gate of Bethlam Hospitals. The issue must shortly be, either a general war, or universal peace; but it is curious to observe as the tone of war increases on the other side, things be-

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\* This refers to the appointment of agents in the various ports of France. "Mr. Williams wrote me that although he had hitherto done the business at a moderate rate, with the view of serving his country, he could by no means accept of Mr. W. Lee's offer of dividing the commissions with him, but would sooner resign the business entirely." *Deane's Narrative*, 49. On the other hand Lee produced sworn affidavits by John Bondfield and J. D. Schweighauser that no demand for any commission, gratuity or reward was made for the appointments.

come calmer here; and when peace is the theme there, we are on all sides here—blustering for war. I hope you will commend me in your warmest manner to your excellent rib.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

CHAILLOT, 25 February, 1778.

Mr. Lee presents his respectful compliments to Dr. Franklin, and begs leave to inform him that in consequence of his appointment yesterday to come here this day at 11 o'clock to examine y<sup>e</sup> public papers that were to be taken out of y<sup>e</sup> trunk bro't from Nantes, containing y<sup>e</sup> papers of the late Mr. Thos. Morris, he got the favor of Mr. Izard to attend, as he knows the seal and hand writing of the Gentleman in whose presence the trunk was sealed at Nantes. However, as something has prevented Doctor Franklin from attending this day, and Mr. Lee is very desirous of getting away to Germany as soon as possible, he begs Dr. F. will be so good as to attend to-morrow at 11 o'clock precisely, or mention any other day and hour that will be more agreeable to him to finish that business. Mr. L. wishes for an answer per the bearer, as he has also wrote to Mr. Deane on the subject, and hopes he will attend whenever it is agreeable to Dr. F.\*

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\*Lee desired that "to prevent reflections or suspicions, it

TO EDWARD BROWNE

PARIS, 26 February, 1778.

*Dear Sir*

A letter to Mr. Grand of the 20th, came safe and mentions one of the 6th which from his being absent on a journey has some how or other been mislaid here (it is verily believed) so that the contents are unknown where they were intended. For two packets came by Lt C—t, but in neither was anything from F—y street, nor is it conjectured what the strange news can be. Sen-sakes indeed hints about some one having lost country house and all, and obliged to appear to his creditors; who it is we can't guess, unless M—l—n.\*

might be opened and the papers divided in our presence. We consented to this; and I went to his house for that purpose, where Mr. Izard attended to verify the seals of the two gentlemen that were on the trunk. But, Mr. Deane being hindered from attending by accident, the business was postponed; and, as I soon after understood by your letters, that Mr. Lee had had the papers under his particular examination several days before that formal sealing, of which I therefore did not see the use, and apprehending some danger of being involved in your quarrel, I refused on consideration to have any thing to do with the opening and sorting of the papers." *Franklin to John Ross, 26 April, 1778.* Lee, on going to Germany, left the trunk in Franklin's hands, taking his receipt for it, witnessed by Deane and his brother, and Izard and Pringle. Lee retained the key of the trunk.

\* Molleson?

"A great Virginia house of the name of Moll—n is said to have stopped last Saturday; it is supposed that instead of carry-

If so, give a hint so that it may be understood. I admire that there is not a word whether anything has been done in y<sup>e</sup> *Hop* or *Insurance* way. If that of the 6th. contained anything material to be known, it should be repeated. Pray look close after the Jew and C—lb—g's affairs. Henrisod should be tho't of when any insurance is to be done, because whatever the premio is, will be so much gained. The Adelphi should not be spared, for he has proved himself as bad as most people before supposed him. Therefore lose not a moment in inforsing the law in the most effectual manner. Compliments to Mr. W., and tell him this, requesting his aid and advice. Relative to the H—ts, they can't complain if the parchment is given them, for it is only restoring things as they were, and if this won't content them, they must be left to their own meditations. Should the boasting crescent get on again, take advantage of the first moment of opening, and get as much as possible if not the whole. A certain lady is extremely anxious for her new tea urn, if good luck should offer any opportunity so that it might get to the bankers here in 11 or 12 daies, from this time. A snuff box was carried by Mr. T——n,\* who must

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ing on his mercantile business, he had commenced politician, and ruined thereby the fairest prospects." *Jenings to Arthur Lee*, n. d.

\* Thornton?

have delivered it by this time. All the travellers are well, and join in sincere good wishes for their old fellow-traveller. 'Tis certainly better to be born fortunate than rich. I—n and R—dl—ly\* sent a little vessel, that when they bo't her was called the Mary Carrol, to Lisbon. She loaded with salt, when vessel and cargo was not worth £600 sterling. She went to Maryland, sold her salt at £10 currency a bushel, which bro't £25,000 currency. She has returned with tobacco, that will nett £7000 sterling, and left above £20,000 currency in the country. Astonishing as this is, it is certainly true. You'll observe that she was British property, which proves that some people had better steal a horse than look over the hedge. Think of the noise that was made in 1775 by some people about a book and a piece or two of linen.

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TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

PARIS, 28 February, 1778.

The unexpected and unlucky return of Mr. Deane gives me a moment to send you the inclosed copies of some former letters and also copies of the correspondence between Mr. Ross and me relative to Mr. Morris's papers, which will give you the facts so far, to form your judgment on†. Tho' I

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\* Mathew Ridley?

† "For my part, Sir, I shall ever maintain and declare openly

wish to avoid all comment on these extraordinary productions, yet it is impossible to forbear observing how this insignificant Scotch pedlar talks as if America was all his own, and Congress his instruments only. Strange indeed it would be if a North Briton should accomplish by assurance what his countrymen have not been able to do by force of arms. He knows best what he means by insinuating that *treasonable correspondence* was to be found amongst Mr. Morris's papers; at all events I can't conceive that Mr. R. Morris or any other connection of the deceased ought to be much obliged to him. It was much against my own wishes that I went to Nantes, but all the commissioners here thot

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my sentiments on the subject, nor shall I relinquish my opinion until you convince me of an essential service rendered to *our Country*, by your sagacity and assiduity to get possession of *treasonable correspondence* by this strain and exertion of your powers, under the cover of your *pretensions* to the measure."

*John Ross to William Lee, Nantes, 13 February, 1778.*

"In the next place permit me to observe that I do not consider you on this occasion, in any degree *concerned* or interested from your appointment as Joint Agent, to *assume* or *interfere* in the inspection of the public or private affairs of the late Mr. Morris, or those of his connections under present circumstances. Because you have no authority from the *Brother* [Robert Morris] nor from the house of W. M. & Co., [Willing, Morris & Co.] neither have you ever *join'd* or superintended any part of the public business with Mr. Morris as agent or *otherwise*, consequently not responsible to the public for what came under his management." *John Ross to William Lee, Nantes, 13 February, 1778.*

It was a duty I owed the public and accordingly they made a joint written application to the minister for an order to have the papers delivered to me. When I went down, the commencement of Mr. Ross's conduct you will learn from his first letter to me and my answer. To his last letter I made no reply, but in order to disappoind the breath of malignity I had the trunk without even opening it myself carried to the public office, where the Greffier, examining them in the presence of Wm. Blake, Esq., of South Carolina and Mr. John Lloyd, merchant in Nantes, found they were the same as when delivered to me; after which they were again put into the trunk and sealed by Messrs. Blake and Lloyd, and so I bro't them all here, where they wait for the attendance of the Commissioners to take out the public papers, when those of a private nature will be again sealed up and left with the commissioners for the legal claimant. I should not have given you so much trouble about this business, but that I am informed that Mr. Ross has laid a plot to make it a subject of public conversation in America, not only by writing to Mr. Morris whose letter inclosed you will please to seal and deliver after perusal, but by impressing the minds of two passengers in his ship, the Brune, Capt. Green—a Mr. Brown, of South Carolina, and Mr. Verplank, of New York—with a false state of the transaction. Neither of them

know one single fact relative to the business themselves; only as they have been informed by Mr. Ross, or others that he has told his tale to. He depends on his influence with Mr. R. Morris, and on that gentleman's influence in Congress; but I have some reason to think he may find that he reckons without his host. However, you will act as the occasion requires. The letters inclosed to the Secret Committee, will show what authority he has assumed to himself in their affairs, and you may communicate the first or the whole of his letters to me, as you think proper. My letter to Loudoun is chiefly political. You will please to open it in case of his absence from Congress. It seems to me at present that in order to keep peace here, I shall be obliged to appoint Mr. John Lloyd and Mr. Jonathan Williams, Dr. Franklin's nephew, commercial agents at Nantes, until the pleasure of the Committee is known; but I beg that such appointment may not be considered as a recommendation of either from me, and for very good reasons I must in particular beg to withdraw anything I have before said in favor of Mr. Lloyd.\* We have all been dupes long enough to serve the private views of others. As soon as ever the Commis-

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\* As late as 22 August, 1778, Arthur Lee wrote to Richard Henry in very high terms of praise for Mr. J. Lloyd. *Life of Arthur Lee*, II., 143.

sioners will finish the business of Mr. Morris's papers, I shall immediately set out for Vienna, from whence I hope to send you some agreeable intelligence in my next. Your son Thom seems happily fixed with Mr. Schweighauser, who appears a very worthy and respectable merchant, very fit and proper to be your agent at Nantes.

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TO FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE.

PARIS, 28<sup>th</sup> Feby 1778.

*My dear Sir:*

Since the original above copied, I wrote you from Nantes by a vessel of Mess<sup>rs</sup> Pliarne and Penet's to South Carolina, giving some accounts of the extraordinary conduct there of Mr. John Ross, relative to M<sup>r</sup> Tho<sup>s</sup> Morris's papers; and also from thence sent two Pamphlets and a paper, by a M<sup>r</sup> Brown of South Carolina. I have now wrote fully to R. H. L. on that subject, desiring him to communicate the contents to you, or in case of his absence that you will open his Packet, and do the needful, to prevent the effects of the calumny of M<sup>r</sup> Ross, which I have understood since, is to be aided by the oral report of some passengers in his ship, the La Brune, Cap: Green, to whom he has strangely misrepresented facts, and they have not heard one word from me, nor do they know one

single fact themselves; the whole of their knowledge being founded on M<sup>r</sup> Ross's acc<sup>t</sup> of things to themselves or others.

The Political Part you shall have to communicate to our brother. The unexpected and unlucky return of M<sup>r</sup> Simeon Deane occasions this dispatch to be sent off in such a hurry, that we shall hardly be able, (at Chaillot) to write so fully as we could wish.

My last advices from England, which are as late as the 20<sup>th</sup> inst<sup>t</sup>, say Gen<sup>r</sup> Howe is universally condemned. He sent a message by Lord Cornwallis, that if Lord Geo. Germaine continued in office, he must desire to come home. Lord Geo. G—ne, on being told this, with a greatness of mind peculiar to himself, immediately begged leave to resign, but his Majesty, with a judgment and goodness natural to him, refused his request.

Howe, it was thought at first might be quieted as other Commanders have been; but considering the whole matter it has at length been determined to recall him, with intimation that his Majesty expected he would have done more; and Gen<sup>r</sup> Clinton was to succeed to the chief Command; but unluckily Gen<sup>r</sup> Clinton being now returning to Europe with leave, another express has been sent off after the first to stop Gen<sup>r</sup> Howe, if Gen<sup>r</sup> Clinton has sailed. In short, there have been four ex-

processes to this subject which will be in effect and one here and gone at present."

Lord North has opened his plan of conciliation, which is both a silly and lenient piece of work. A full attempt has been made here to induce Par-

\* Howe had asked to be recalled, and the King was convinced that it would be as difficult to induce him to remain as it would to get Lord George Germaine to act towards him in such a way as will make the efforts of others not prove abortive." — *The King to Lord Howe, 23 January 1776.* In February of the recall of General Howe was a secret measure. Germaine at this time did not think the repeal of the Boston act would lead the colonies back to their Allegiance to the crown; the Intolerable act was what galled them. He therefore wished to repeal all legislation subsequent to 1770, but hesitated at the policy of such a measure. Doubtful whether it would bring France into a treaty with the rebels, or would lead the colonies to break with France, Lord George supported the pacific propositions of Lord North. Germaine was directed to write a sensible letter to Sir W. Howe that may encourage him to act with spirit and the arrival of his successor, but be prepared a letter to [redacted] to note that the King intended of sending a His instructions to Sir Henry Clinton had impressed Howe while his profuse promises of reinforcements and supplies, and some performance had rendered abortive the plans of the American commander. In less than a month after Germaine wrote to Howe of his recall, he had himself resigned because of a fancied slight upon him by the King's rewarding Sir Guy Carleton with a secretary.

Franklin was at this time writing to Hartley — America has been forced and driven into the arms of France . . . They can now persuade her return and submission to no authorities so easily as Great Britain.

liament in a Treaty of Peace to declare that the currency of America shall not be admitted as legal tender.

The attempt is ridiculous and malicious. You know well one of the Signers, (viz.: M—l—n\*); it is necessary, however, that he should appear soon to his creditors, so far my letter says.

Tho' you will have the two Bills, by this conveyance sent to Congress, I will mention that the first *enacts* the right of imposing *even Internal Taxes* upon you; which is going farther than the Declaratory Act, as that only in general terms, *implies* the right of Taxation. Tho' this right by the Act is to be suspended, yet another Parliament, even another day, the same Parliament, may, for good reasons, resume that right. The Act of Parliament is still more impudent; I can't call it illusory, for it is too explicit to be misconceived. The Commissioners are to be vested with full powers to do all imaginable mischief and villainy, without the shadow of authority to do any good, until it is confirmed by Parliament, viz.: they may proclaim a cessation of the *Land* war, and break it at pleasure, so that if the American Army disbands, on the faith of their Proclamation, the war may be commenced at any moment they please, when they are most sure of doing the greatest mischief.

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\* Molleson.

No truce should be admitted or Treaty commenced within 3 or 4 months after every British soldier has been embarked from the Continent; or rather until their arrival in Europe, with Bag and Baggage, is authenticated.

Again the commissioners may suspend the Prohibitory Act, and enforce it at pleasure; so that if American vessels venture to sea, on the faith of the Proclamation, they may at any time be taken in the trap, by the law being enforced. Besides it should be remembered, that even if the Act was entirely repealed, you can't get military stores from Great Britain nor manufactures, because these last are prohibited by your own resolutions.

'Tis not possible to conceive that the British ministry, idiots and wicked as they are, can be such perfect fools, as to expect any benefit from these Acts; the Truth is what they publicly boast, that their greatest reliance is on Bribery, if they are but once admitted to have free access to the Members of the Congress; for it is in every one's mouth, that near half a million of guineas are sent over.\*

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\* Franklin gave a calmer estimate of North's propositions, but not less unfavorable to their sincerity. "What reliance can we have on an act expressing itself to be only a declaration of the *intention* of Parliament concerning the *exercise* of the right of imposing taxes in America, where, in the bill itself, as well as in the title, a right is supposed and claimed which never existed; and a *present intention* only is declared not to use it, which may be changed by another act next session, with a pre-

The actual situation of things here, and the number of land forces on the coast, will certainly prevent any more troops being sent over this spring to America, even if Great Britain had them, but in fact they neither have or can get any more to send. A gentleman writes from England that it is possible Manchester may afford a small regiment of Weavers in 1779 for America, but it is now quite certain they cannot do it in 1778.

The clouds seem to gather, and threaten a war in Germany, tho' everything seemed settled a few weeks ago. The Emperor, and Elector Palatine, had agreed between themselves about the division

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amble that, this *intention* being found inexpedient, it is thought proper to repeal this act and resume the exercise of *the right* in its full extent. If any solid benefit was intended by this, why is it confined to the colonies of North America and not extended to the loyal ones in the sugar islands? But it is now useless to criticise, as all acts that suppose your future government of the colonies can be no longer sufficient.

"In the act for appointing Commissioners, instead of full powers to agree upon terms of peace and friendship, with a promise of ratifying such treaty as they shall make in pursuance of those powers, it is declared that their agreements shall have no force nor effect, nor be carried into execution, till approved of by Parliament; so that everything of importance will be uncertain. But they are allowed to proclaim a cessation of arms, and revoke their proclamation, as soon as, in consequence of it, our militia have been allowed to go home; they may suspend the operation of acts prohibiting trade, and take off that supervision when our merchants, in consequence of it, have been induced to send their ships to sea; in short, they may

of the Estate of the late Elector of Bavaria, but the King of Prussia says, he must have his share of the plunder, or some equivalent, to increase his strength in proportion to that of the house of Austria; otherwise he will try what is to be got by war; which disposition England will no doubt endeavor to support, in order to embarrass France, that will probably take part with the Emperor.

I hope however things will be settled by negotiation, as there is a probability at present; otherwise I shall be much embarrassed in my negotiations in that quarter, *being only detained for the Commissioners to finish the necessary proceedings relative to M<sup>r</sup>. Morris's papers; which being done I shall set*

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do everything that can have a tendency to divide and distract us, but nothing that can afford us security. Indeed, sir, your ministers do not know us. We may not be quite so cunning as they, but we have really more sense, as well as more courage, than they have ever been willing to give us credit for; and I am persuaded these acts will rather obstruct peace than promote it, and that they will not answer in America the mischievous and malevolent ends for which they were intended. In England they may indeed amuse the public creditors, give hopes and expectations that shall be of some present use, and continue the mismanagers a little longer in their places. *Voilà tout.*" *Franklin to Hartley, 26 February, 1778.*

The King thought he was making "generous offers" to the Colonies, and doubtless he and North were sincere in their wishes to conciliate. Even Franklin said the propositions "would probably have been accepted, if they had been made two years ago." *Franklin to Gerard, 1 April, 1778.* See Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, IV, 76.

*out immediately for Vienna. According to the usual mode of doing business here, that which ought not to take up more than 2 or 3 hours, will I expect keep here me Ten or Twelve days.*

'Tis extremely irksome, even to think, much more so to write on the horrid management of your business in this quarter. Cap<sup>t</sup> Young of the Independence is still in the river Loire, tho' his dispatches were sent from hence the 1<sup>st</sup> Dec<sup>t</sup>. So are all the supplies for your army, that ought to have been in America three months ago, when they would have gone much safer than now.

I know the excuse will be contrary winds, and the fear of the British cruisers, but be assured that there is not a syllable of truth in either. Letters from Nantes yesterday (one of which I enclose) say the ships are not yet all loaded.

The whole arises from mal-conduct at Headquarters, and the persons he employs follow his own example of being more intent on private gain than public good.

The remedy must come from your side, and speedily, or the mischief will be irremediable.

The secret committee, as well as the other committees, should attend more to business as a body, and not leave the whole to the management of any one member; *and here the political and mercantile characters should be entirely distinct and separate, and both of them executed by persons of your express*



*appointment. If this regulation does not take place soon an infinite deal of mischief will, inevitably, ensue.*

Congress will, no doubt, be pressed for remittances, and to comply with an unwise, injudicious and unauthorized Contract made here with the Farmers General for 5,000 Hds. of Tobacco; altho' more money comes in here from voluntary contributions than will furnish all the supplies you want, and pay the interest of all the money you have borrowed in America; for the expenditure of which no account is rendered, nor can any be procured.\*

The contract for tobacco should be let to sleep; return the money when you are able with the interest.

Congress can't too soon positively forbid the money to be borrowed in Europe, which they ordered in Dec<sup>r</sup>. 1776.

M<sup>r</sup> Beaumarchais makes a considerable or rather an enormous demand against you, which is thought utterly unjust. Congress is desired to let it be settled here. Endeavor if possible to prevent this request from being complied with; order the whole to be stated to Congress, when the demand will be entirely relinquished, or, if persisted in, will discover such a connection and proceedings as will certainly produce very great public utility.†

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\* This was an entirely gratuitous supposition and statement.

† "We have, to avoid disputes at a particular time, delivered

I pray you to send me by several opportunities a list of Congress, and several Committees; the Constitution and Laws of Virginia, as now settled; and how long you and R. H. L. can be permitted to remain in Congress; and the names of such in case of your absence, that you think it will be safe and prudent in me to correspond freely with.

It seems as if the minister of this country, and one or two others, wish to keep at peace with Great Britain, but the King and everybody else is strong for war; and things are in such a state, that it hardly seems possible to maintain peace for 2 months.

This country and Spain have not been during this century so well prepared for war as at present.

Two of the Commissioners, at present talked of in England to be sent to you, are W<sup>m</sup> Henry Littleton, Lord Westcoate, late Governor of South Carolina, a Lord of the Treasury, and Hans Stanley, Cofferer of his Majesty's household, and Governor of the Isle of Wight,\* both members of Parliament.

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up the cargo brought by the Amphitrite to Mr. Beaumarchais. We hear he has sent over a person to demand a great sum of you on account of arms, ammunition, &c. We think it will be best for you to leave the demand to be settled by us here, as there is a mixture in it of public and private concern which you cannot so well develop." *Commissioners to the Committee of Foreign Affairs*, 16 February, 1778.

\* Hans Stanley, a grandson of Sir Hans Sloane, was negotiating a treaty at Paris in 1761 and 1762. Early in 1780 he com-

These men are thought deep, overreaching gentry, and to be as faithless as any of the British ministry. The last (H. S.) is an old stager, and as much experienced in the art of bribery and corruption, as any man in England.

Take care how you let them come among you, or even into the country.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PARIS, February 28th, 1778.

*Sir:*

The unexpected return of Mr. Simeon Deane gives me the opportunity of enclosing you a copy of my last, which went by an express from Spain, to which be pleased to refer. I should before this have set off for Vienna, but the Commissioners at this Court have not yet found time to examine the papers relative to the commercial concerns of Congress, taken from the private papers of the late Mr. Thomas Morris, as Mr. Deane's card of this date (a

mitted suicide in a fit of momentary frenzy—as his father had done before him.

William Henry Littleton was a brother of George, Lord Littleton. On his way to South Carolina in 1755 he was taken by a French vessel and carried a prisoner to Nantes. "He is a very worthy young man, but so stiffened with Sir George's old fustian, that I am persuaded he is at this minute in the citadel of Nantes comparing himself to Regulus." *Horace Walpole's Letters.*

copy of which is enclosed) will show. As soon as that business is finished, I shall immediately set out to execute your commands in Germany, where, I am sorry to inform you, there are now appearances of an approaching rupture between the Emperor and King of Prussia, relative to the possession of the late Elector of Bavaria's estates. The Elector Palatine, who is the rightful heir, has agreed by treaty, signed the 12th ultimo between him and the Emperor on the division of the Bavarian estates; but the King of Prussia is not satisfied because he has not a share. He has, therefore, commenced a negotiation with Great Britain and the Princes in Germany to support his pretensions to some parts of Germany, founded on claims of right that go several generations back. Great Britain, you may be sure, will instigate him to go on, because, if war ensues, France will probably take part with the Emperor, which will render their meditated attack on her more likely to succeed; but I still hope peace will be maintained by negotiation in that quarter.

The British Ministry are now fairly pushed to the wall; after exerting every effort to procure men for the ensuing campaign, both at home and abroad, and finding it impracticable any where, so odious are they and their measures, they have recourse to acts of Parliament, which are so presumptuous and treacherous that it is hardly possible to say in

which they excel. You will have the two bills by this conveyance, which are too plain to be misunderstood by any one who knows the framers; therefore, I shall only observe that by the first the *right* of taxing you is explicitly enacted, though suspended for the present, which is going something further than the declaratory act, for by that the right of taxation was only implied. By the second bill, the Commissioners are vested with full powers to do all possible mischief to you, and no possible good until it is confirmed by Parliament. Under these circumstances I do not well see how any treaty can be commenced, nor perhaps will it be prudent, in the moment of their weakness and distress, to agree to a cessation of hostilities by land unless your enemies will remove all their troops to Europe.

The situation of Spain, her millions being yet on the sea, and the circumstances in Germany before-mentioned, I believe induce this Court still to continue the injunctions of secrecy relative to the treaties; but if war is not declared before, I do not see how it can be avoided as soon as you publish them, which I suppose will be done as soon as they come to hand, or at least such parts as will announce the fact to the world in such a manner that it cannot be doubted.

The number of French troops that are now on the coast in Brittany and Normandy, with the

powerful naval preparations both in this country and Spain, would effectually prevent Great Britain from sending any more troops to America this year even if she could get them.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

Mr. DEANE presents his compliments to Mr. Lee: As to-morrow is fixed by the Minister for sending off the despatches, it will be impossible for him to attend the examination of Mr. Morris's papers before his brother sets off. As Mr. Deane had the honor of mentioning before, it shall be his first business after the despatches are gone.

*Saturday Morning.*

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TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS.

CHAILLOT, RUE BATTAILLE,  
près PARIS, 5 March, 1778.

*Dear Sir:*

I have before me your favors of the 24th and 28th ults., and agree with you that it is not worth contending the commission on the captain's venture of vice with Mr. Peltier,\* tho' it is not right, because expressly contrary to verbal agreement. But it is lamentable to think that some people are not to be bound by anything that you have not in writing; however, I can't help again saying that this should caution you in your transactions with Mr. P.—.

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\* Peltier du Doyer.

The best way will be to settle immediately with Mr. Peltier, and receive the balance, taking on yourself to answer, so far as you receive, for any allowance that may be judged right to make Messrs. Berthault and Landlazuge. But as I understand the case at present, they have no just claim at all, tho' there seems so general an opinion in a certain country that every individual has a right to plunder the Americans, and particularly the Congress, that I am afraid if the claim is persisted in they will gain their point. You will, however, do the best you can, and advise with Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Schweighauser whether it is most proper to refer it to the merchants on change, or to your merchants' court.\* You formerly hinted your surprise at my silence relative to your question about being answerable for a proportion of the advances for Babson and Kendrick. You could not be more

\* "I send an order this day to suspend the action against Mr. Peltier. But surely he acted very irregularly to sell a cargo consigned to us, without our orders, and give the produce to another. We ourselves never had any dealings with M. Beaumarchais, and he has never produced any account to us, but says the States owe him a great deal of money. Upon his word only we gave him up the cargo of the *Amphitrite*; he promised then to give us an account, but has never done it; and now by means of M. Peltier he has seized another cargo. I imagine there is no doubt but M. Peltier would be obliged to pay us the money if the action were continued. And methinks every man who makes a demand ought to deliver an account." *Franklin to Williams, 19 March, 1779.*

surprised than *I was* at the *request*, as the thing appeared to me at the time. Just before the receipt of that letter from you, I had been told that your bill for £50,000 on their account had been accepted, and would be paid when due. You had not mentioned a syllable of it to me, which occasioned my surprise, and therefore I chose to wait in silence till this seeming mystery should be cleared up by time. The other day, by accident, I learned that the 50,000 livres were not paid, but certainly would be soon, and probably the whole value of the prizes. You mentioned also my refusal to lend my name in the business; but you will recollect that was only to a letter to the Captains ordering them to sea, which I refused for two reasons: because I did not chuse to trust these strange kind of men with my name, and because, from the general course of their behavior, it appeared to me the most likely way to prevent them from going. But you can't forget that I signed the contract for the sugar, and in consequence had the honor of becoming acquainted with the nature of a process verbal. I have entered into these points because I apprehend you must have talked of them, since I find a *malignant spirit*\* has charged them to me as crimes, leaving them to you now to put them right, if he is capable of it. I presume Mr. Lloyd has men-

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\*A reference to Ross.

tioned to you the scheme proposed of appointing you and him joint commercial agents at Nantes. The business was yesterday fully talked over with the Commissioners. None of them had any objection, but they did not seem to think they ought to interfere in the appointment. Dr. F——n declared for himself that he could not in consequence of his connection with you, least he might bring censure on himself, but tho't I must do as I pleased. I see not at present anything to prevent its taking place, and 'till the business is finished I have only to add that I am, etc.

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TO BARON SCUHLENBERG.

PARIS, 6 March, 1778.

*Sir:*

I have to acknowledge your obliging favor of the 3d ulto., which from my being at a distance from home at the time of its coming here, did not come to my hands as soon as it otherways would have done. The assurance of the continuation of his Majesty's good disposition towards the United States of America is particularly pleasing at this time, because there are letters from London that say "we have detached the King of Prussia from the American cause by paying his demands." This, I trust, is only a finesse on the part of the British Ministry to impose on us a distrust of our

best friends, among whom we shall ever be happy to rank his Prussian Majesty.

The exhausted state of Great Britain and the utter incapability of her ministers to prosecute their weak and mad contest with America by arms, is so fully apparent from the bill carried thro' the House of Commons, and their other public proceedings, that I shall not detain you with any strictures on that head, because I am sure your penetration will see their pitiable situation in as clear a light as I do. We have advices from America as late as January 22d. General Washington was then encamped within a few miles of Philadelphia, where General Howe was so closely beset that he could not venture out to forage but with his whole army; and notwithstanding the aid from the ships of war, the Americans had taken in the river Delaware several transports laden with clothing, arms, etc., so that the American army was clothed and supplied with ammunition in great measure by the British ministry. Gen'l Gates had taken Fort Independence, which prepares the passage to New York, that will probably return that city into the hands of the Americans, if the winter, as usual, is severe enough to render the ships of war useless. General Burgoyne was then at Boston, with such of his troops as had not deserted.

On the whole, I think it more than probable that in 12 months from this day, G. B. will not be in possession of one foot of land in all North America.

TO JOHN LLOYD.

CHAILLOT, RUE BATAILLES,  
près PARIS, 7 March, 1778.

*Sir:*

I should not have been so long in acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favor of the 28th ulto., (the contents of which were quite as desired,) but that I was in hopes of making one letter do for the whole. However, as according to the usual mode of doing business here, every little thing is to be trained out into a tedious negotiation, so that I am at last compelled to write, tho' the agency business is as unsettled as it was ten days ago. Mr. Izard has already informed you of the proposal I made to the commissioners, which Dr. F——n positively declared he would not interfere in, in any manner whatever. Mr. D. made no positive objection, but I could not learn he approved. Therefore to reduce things to a certainty, I have written to them, mentioning my plan, and desiring their sentiments on it; to which they have not given an answer as yet. If it comes to me in time, a copy shall be sent with this, and that you may judge fully, I will mention the plan I proposed, viz.: to appoint you and Mr. Williams jointly for Nantes and all the parts in Brittany; A. Limozin for Havre, S. & S. H. Delap for Bordeaux, and Mr. Bondfield for Rochelle, Rochfort and Bayonne. Mr. Izard observed that he imagined this plan did not come up

to your ideas, as he tho't that you expected to be placed in exactly the same situation as Mr. Morris and myself. I told him this part had not been explicitly entered into between us, and that I was sure the material part of the business would arise in Nantes, and the ports of Brittany. However, if that was any objection with you to engaging in the business, it should be removed in a moment, because I would make the appointment to you and Mr. Williams *general*, recommending Mr. Bondfield to be employed, if anything should occur to be done in the ports I had allotted to him, and Mr. S—r at Nantes, if it was necessary at times to employ a French house. But we are totally at a loss what to do, because in your letter to him you say: "if a perfect confidential and satisfactory assent can be obtained from the Hon. Commissioners to an appointment for me as public agent, but without it, I would not by any means accept the office." From what Mr. I[zar]d and myself have told you, you'll see how little prospect there is of obtaining *such* assent. I shall however wait for your own determination, which I beg may be sent by y<sup>e</sup> return of post, so that I may have it by Saturday or Sunday (15) at farthest. It seems to me that the appointment in the manner you wish from the above words will not be in my power or that of your particular friends to get accomplished. In that case all that remains for me to say is that I

shall be very ready to authorize you, if you remain here, to take up any vessel or transact any mercantile business that comes to France addressed to me individually or jointly with Mr. Morris as commercial agents for America. The rest will remain with the Secret Committee to make such arrangement hereafter as they may judge proper. Mr. Ross is certainly not quite right in his mind, for in a letter to y<sup>e</sup> Commissioners he seems to bear as hard on Mr. R. Morris as in one of his to me; I may surely be content to bear the misfortune of laying under his censure since he deals so freely with the person he calls his friend. But perhaps he wants to be as conspicuous as his namesake and countryman (probably relation) Captain Ross, who acted so extraordinarily in London about that Yankee privateer, and for which an English Jury made him pay soundly.\* Mr. Ross has at last declared that the cargoes of the Henrietta and Le Brunne are public property, also the latter vessel; but it is a pity he had not attended more to their despatch than attempting to breed riots, whereby

\* See introduction, page 40, etc.

"Yesterday came on before Lord Mansfield and a special jury, in the Court of King's-Bench, at Guildhall, London, the trial of an indictment removed into that Court by certiorari, against Captain R——, for an assault committed by him on the Royal Exchange, upon Mr. Alderman Lee. The Jury withdrew for an hour and a half, and brought in a verdict finding the defendant guilty." London Chronicle, 1 March, 1777.

possibly they might have got away with convoy,  
and the Henrietta escaped seizure, which may  
be yet attended with disagreeable circumstances.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

CHAILLOT, 12 March, 1778.

*Sir:*

In your favor dated the 6th instant, which you did me the honor of delivering in person last night, you are pleased to tell me that my proposition about appointing agents in the ports shall be laid before the Commissioners when they meet. 'Tis now five days since I wrote to the Commissioners on that subject, and am sorry they have not in that time found ten leisure minutes to answer my letter on business in which I conceive the public to be much interested. You add that in looking over mine of the 2d instant, you observe an expression which you do not like, which is this: "I am always willing to submit my judgment to yours, therefore will deliver the trunk." You continue: "This implies that I had advised the delivery of the trunk to me, which you comply'd with contrary to your own judgment." My conduct afterwards proves so clearly my meaning that implication is unnecessary to show that I understood the proposition in that light, as I acted accordingly. I went to Nantes to take possession of Mr. Thos. Morris's

papers, as being his late colleague in the commercial agency, not only under the sanction and approbation of the Commissioners, but by their advice with very great inconvenience to myself. When I got there, Mr. Jno. Ross tho't proper (tho' I am sure totally unauthorized) verbally and by letter, which you have read, to prohibit my executing the public business which had been entrusted to my care. Judging from what I had before experienced (and the issue has proved that my judgment was right,) how much countenance Mr. Ross would receive here, I tho't it advisable to have the papers sealed up as delivered to me, and to bring them to Paris, that, in the presence of the Commissioners as ye<sup>e</sup> representatives of America in France, those relative to the public concerns might be taken out and those of a private nature left in their hands, until some person properly authorized should appear to demand them. On my arrival here, I gave the Commissioners an account of my proceedings, and also of the unjustifiable behavior of Mr. Ross; proposing at the same time that they should see the public papers taken out as before mentioned. This was not only agreed to, but yourself, Mr. Lee and Mr. Izard attended for that purpose, when the business was postponed by Mr. Deane's being prevented from attending by an unforeseen accident, which occasioned a delay of some days. I had returned about 8 days, and never heard any ob-

jection made to this mode, until a letter to the Commissioners from Mr. Jno. Ross was received, which tho' in my opinion highly deserving of very severe censure, was not only indirectly approved of by you, but that censure transferred to my conduct. You then tho't proper to refuse absolutely to proceed in the manner before agreed on, and pointed out another, which I complyed with, anxiously wishing to avoid disputes of every kind, and the imputation of censure from every individual. I have now done my public duty in our one department, as far as I was permitted by a conduct that appears to me utterly unaccountable, and am about to proceed on another; but I can't take my leave without observing that instead of receiving that aid and assistance which I had a right to expect, I have met with every embarrassment that could be possibly thrown in my way.

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

13 March, 1778.

*Sir:*

Before I quitted this place, it was my wish to put the public commercial business, as far as I was empowered, into such a train that it might be conducted with harmony and effect. I had experienced in myself that the partiality you and Mr. Deane manifested for Mr. Williams, and the powers

with which you thought proper to invest him, had greatly impeded me in conducting the public business. Much more reason was there for apprehending the same impediment to a person of my appointment. I had a good opinion of Mr. W's intentions, but did not think his experience equal to the discharge of the business, if he was alone.

In these circumstances, I proposed to unite Mr. Williams with Mr. Lloyd, a gentleman of approved knowledge and experience, and desired your concurrence. You chose to refuse it. Mr. Lloyd, viewing the matter in the same light, and being apprised of your refusal, does not choose to undertake the business, nor can I press it.

This new embarrassment thrown in my way delays my departure upon my other public business to arrange this anew. I add this new complaint to those I have already made of the embarrassments thrown upon the execution of my duty by those of the Commissioners who have taken the management of the business to themselves. The delicacy you are pleased to mention with regard to your relation, Mr. Williams, as a reason for not concurring in a plan so well intended and so unexceptionable, is the less satisfactory, as it is known to me, and is indeed notorious to all the world, that you have not only concurred in appointing him to a similar office, but have put near a million of the public money into his hands.

TO SILAS DEANE.

CHAILLOT, Monday, 16 March, 1778.

*Sir:*

In your letter received late last Saturday night you express your surprise at my asking for a literal and attested copy of such parts of Mr. Ross's late letters as relate to me, meaning that the copy could be attested by you or any one else who read the original. I cannot help thinking such surprise would never have existed had you attended to your former letter, where in a very material part you give me your explanation only of what Mr. Ross writes, and not his own words; and I still think as Mr. Ross's letters are looked upon by you as charges against me, that you cannot in justice refuse to give me a literal copy of his own expressions.

Upon a revisal of your own conduct on former occasions, you will find that your sentiments were not always the same relative to private correspondence as expressed in your letter.

You have much misconceived what I said to you the other day relative to the sale of prizes being taken out of the hands of Mr. Morris and myself as commercial agents, and put into the hands of Mr. Williams, contrary to the appointment of the Secret Committee. I only meant to inform you that I was mistaken, not "grossly deceived," in attributing that act *to you solely*, because I was then sat-

isfied that Dr. Franklin had taken his share in the transaction. But it is not an exculpation of the action, that you were only a copartner in it. I always tho't the act wrong, and shall continue to think so, until you show me good authority for doing it, and good reason for throwing such a slur on my character, thereby in great measure incapacitating me to render that service to my country which I wished to do, when, on the appointment of the Secret Committee, I gave up a very respectable station which was for life, and sacrificed no inconsiderable part of my private fortune to enter upon their business. You had Mr. Morris's sentiments and mine on the subject, in our joint letter to you and Dr. F—n; and mine farther, in my particular letters to you. The transaction appears to me a reflection on the Committee, and an injury to Mr. Morris and myself, totally uninvited I am sure on my part; and that injury aggravated by repeatedly promising many months ago to recall Mr. Williams' appointment, which has never that I know of been complied with. As such, I have ever mentioned it, and, you know, have wrote about it, tho' not so fully as to yourself.

Insinuations or opinions I shall decline taking notice of, especially when coming from Mr. Ross ; but if you have any explicit charge against me, either from written or viva voce evidence, you will always find me ready to give an explicit and satisfactory answer.

TO JOHN LLOYD.

CHAILLOT, 21 March, 1778.

*Sir:*

I duly received your obliging favor of the 12th current, which should have been answered sooner, had we not been so much taken up with a variety of pressing and important affairs. The plans conceived relative to the agency are all reversed, since you decline it and Dr. F. has declared he does wish Mr. Williams to be concerned.

With respect to the continental dollars, I fear it will not be practicable to invest them here, for on enquiry I am told there are a great many in Paris that have been sent from England to try if they could not be changed with the Commissioners or the Americans. Howe took the State chest at Wilmington, with £30,000 in it, which were advertised for sale in London; besides, an immense number have been forged, on Lord Dunmore's and the Scotch plan, which have been endeavored to be contrived into circulation in order to injure the American credit. Tho' it may be difficult to exchange them, yet I should think any merchant would take them as a collateral security for what he might advance.

Last Tuesday in the Houses of Lords and Commons, it was decided for war by a great majority, and it was accordingly declared in London against France on Wednesday last. We have had here

two expresses from London that have been only 40 hours each on the way.\*

Yesterday in form the American Commissioners were introduced to the King at Versailles, and tomorrow they are to be introduced to the Queen. War will probably be declared here in a day or two. You have probably heard before what is public here, that Mr. Deane is recalled, and Mr. John Adams appointed in his place, who is expected every day. Mr. R. Morris has retired for two months, but will then return to Congress again, being chosen a delegate for Pennsylvania this year.

TO FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE.

PARIS, 23 March, 1778.

*My dear Brother:*

When this will get to your hands I know not, but request you to attend to the inclosed, which will clear up, so far as I am concerned, the business of the two West Indiamen prizes last summer at Nantes, which I am just informed our good

\* On March 17th North laid before Parliament a message from the throne, containing information of the treaty between France and the United States, the recall from Paris of the British ambassador, and his intention of repelling the insult and maintaining the reputation of the country. In the Commons the government obtained a majority of 150, and in the Lords, one of 43.

friends here (Mr. C[armichael] at their head) have assiduously circulated in England (possibly in America) was entirely owing to my refusing to take an ample price for the whole. I mean thus to put you in possession of ample proof to silence such assertions, should they be made, or even whispered with you. I have with this sent a large pacquet to R. H. Lee, which you will please open and do what you think is necessary and proper in the business, provided he is not at Congress.

I leave this to-morrow, heartily fatigued by the extraordinary conduct of your servants here, for my destination in Germany, where the utmost address and management will be necessary to accomplish in any degree the wishes of Congress.\*

At all events it must take a great deal of time, perseverance and patience, for the last post informs us that *war* is actually commenced between Austria and Prussia, in which France has positively declared she will not take any part, having enough to do to fulfill and secure her engagements to you. In this situation neither Austria or Prussia can be expected to declare hastily in your favor, altho' the King of Prussia's minister three months ago wrote positively that his Majesty would acknowledge the Independence of America as soon as France had done it. This you will

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\* Lee was thus not in Paris when Deane left the city, on the night of March 30th.

know France has done openly, not only by avowing her treaty with you to the British Court, but by receiving publickly your Commissioners at Versailles the 20th inst., where and when they were inform introduced to the King by the Secretary of State, Count Vergennes, with Mr. Izard and myself, as commissioners to other courts. 'Tis said here that war was declared in London against France on Friday last, but this wants confirmation. The only reason we have to believe it is, the inconceivable folly of the British ministry. If war is declared, you may fully count France, Spain, Portugal and America against Great Britain and Ireland. Holland will be neuter, and stick to the plunder on all sides. Russia is on the eve of a war with the Turks, and all Germany will be fully employed between Austria and Prussia. Thus you will have little else to do but to take to yourselves the Floridas, Canada, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, excluding Great Britain from a share in the cod fishery, while France takes the East Indies and she with Spain divide the West India islands. So that you see there will be sufficient work for all your forces for one year at least. But if the British ministry have a single grain of common sense, they will let France alone, acknowledge your independence, keeping Nova Scotia, Canada and a right to the fishery jointly with you and France, making peace immediately, passing an act of ob-

livion, for Great Britain as well as for those that may be in Canada,\* &c., granting a mutual right of citizenship and paying for towns burnt and other damages. If Great Britain can obtain peace on these terms, it will be very fortunate for her indeed. I pray you to send me by different opportunities a list of Congress, and the different committees, specifying when each member was chosen and for how long a time he can continue; also copies of the Constitutions of every State and the General Confederacy. It seems to me that the British Constitution, if cleared from its impurities, is as well adapted to maintain the general liberty of the subject as any that has ever yet been devised; therefore, in my opinion, those States that lay that down as a model to improve on, will keep their liberty the longest of any. Let me hear from you by all opportunities under care to Mr. Schweighauser, merchant at Nantes, or Mr. John Bondfield, merchant at Academie, Bordeaux. . . .

P. S. You have often had my opinion of Mr. Carmichael, who is going out in Captain Nicholson. Should by his artifices any employment be

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\* "I will never consent that in any treaty that may be concluded a single word be mentioned concerning Canada, Nova Scotia, or the Floridas, which are colonies belonging to this country; and the more they are kept unlike the other colonies the better, for it is by them we are able to keep a certain awe over the abandoned colonies, where good garrisons must be continually kept." *The King to Lord North, 26 March, 1778.*

proposed for him, wherein he is to have any kind of connection with me, I beg of you explicitly and publickly to declare my dissent; for being most perfectly and thoroughly acquainted with his *principles* and abilities, I am determined that no consideration whatever shall induce me, either to hold any correspondence, or have any kind of intercourse with him.

My services to America want not my own blazoning, nor any false coloring to heighten their merit. Mr. Car—l indeed may stand in need of such aid, and I will only say with Iago “he that steals my money steals trash—’twas mine, ’tis his, and may be anybodies. But he that *filches* from me my good name, steals that which not enriching him, makes me *poor indeed.*” Read the character of Iago in Othello, and the character that the ghost and Hamlet give the King, Hamlet’s uncle.

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

PARIS, 23 March, 1778.

*My dear Brother.*

I refer you to the inclosed copy of mine per Mr. Simeon Deane of the 28th ulto, who carried also several other letters from my brother and me, for which a receipt was given to my brother, a copy of which he will no doubt send you, for really there has been such conduct here, that there is no knowing whom to trust.

I now send you the whole correspondence relative to the papers of the late Mr. Thos. Morris, to enable you to set the business in its proper light to all the world, and particularly to Mr. R. Morris, on whom Mr. Ross solely depends for gratifying his resentment on being disappointed in his favorite wish of having the whole American commerce in his unhallowed North British hands.

I think you will be at no loss to determine from various letters of Mr. Ross, that he has been very long planning to get the American agency out of the hands first of Mr. Thos. Morris, and then out of his and mine too—all upon a private letter from Mr. R. Morris only (a copy of which is inclosed), whom he seems to think is King of America, as having unlimited power in Congress; at least he flatters him as such, in the same line of conduct for which his countrymen are famous. That Mr. Ross should be countenanced here by Mr. D. is not surprising, because he hopes through the aid of Mr. M. to escape the censure with you which he has so much reason to apprehend. I can only add, that if the secret committee do not fully and explicitly reprimand Mr. Ross, and in future attend to their business *as a committee*, without permitting any *single* member to exercise the power of the whole body, they will never find an honest or independent man that will act for them. In consequence of the strange conduct of the commissioners here, I have

been left alone to act for the committee in appointing agents in the best manner I could, and accordingly have appointed Mr. Andrew Limozin at Havre de Grasse, Mr. Schweighauser at Nantes, and Mr. John Bondfield at Bordeaux and its neighborhood, who are in my opinion the best men in the different places; and if the committee continues a mercantile body (which as far as I can judge now will be totally wrong and highly injurious to America,) they ought to be employed, until by positive misconduct they should chance to forget the trust reposed in them. I know the house of S. and J. H. Delap at Bordeaux is greatly in the favor of Mr. M., so is Mr. Ross; therefore should not be surprized if he endeavored to throw the whole American business into their hands. He may trust his own where he pleases, but I should be very sorry indeed to find any part of the public interest put into their hands; having unanswerable objections to both, which would be too long to enumerate here. I have not sent to the committee any part of Dr. F—n's correspondence, or any others, since the trunk with Mr. Morris's papers was put into his hands ; but I can't enter into the reason of his *expressed* scruples about Mr. Williams, when he is the very man that Dr. F—n and Mr. D. tho't proper to appoint to sell the prizes in direct contradiction to the Committee's instructions to their agent, and to whom they have in the course

of the last 8 months, intrusted the expenditure of near a million of livres of the public money.

I come now to Mr. Carmichael, who is gone over in Capt. Nicholson. This character I have often mentioned to you and Loudoun, and I must again repeat that from the most perfect knowledge of his abilities, and particularly of his *principles*, I am irrevocably determined that no consideration in this world shall ever induce me to hold any kind of correspondence, or have any kind of intercourse with him. 'Tis said here that Mr. M. has wrote to Mr. Ross (which letter is lately come to hand) that C——l is appointed secretary to the embassy at this court, and I am just informed that he went over on a plan concerted between him, Mr. D. and a Dr. Bancroft that is here, to get appointed deputy to Prussia, on the pretext that Vienna and Prussia was too much for one person to execute; which being obtained, the field would be left open for Dr. B., his rival, to get the secretaryship at this court. The scheme, I am told, is deeply plan'd, therefore attention to the measures of C—— may be necessary. I trust you will endeavor to prevent Congress from being precipitate in any measure relative to Vienna or Prussia, because from the present appearance of things, there is the greatest probability of my being publicly received at Berlin and being rejected at Vienna, in which case, if the appointment to Berlin is changed, I shall be let down into

a very shabby situation indeed, after having had all the trouble and accomplished the greatest, at least most important to us, part of my mission. I shall set off certainly for Germany the day after tomorrow, and shall immediately give Congress a true account of the real situation of affairs there, when they may be able to form an accurate judgment of what may be necessary and proper for them to do. Every day a war is expected between Austria and Prussia, and until things have taken a decided turn there is no man breathing that can say it will be prudent or advisable for you to take any new measures for that quarter. The wisest thing you can do is to remain quiet a little while, more especially as France has now taken an open and decided part, which establishes our independence beyond a possibility of doubt, and a speedy end of our troubles, on which I most heartily and sincerely congratulate you and my country. We must, however, not rest without the whole continent to the Mississippi, excluding the British from the Newfoundland fishery.

Should Mr. R. Morris take up Mr. Ross to vindicate his conduct, ask him for authority for such vindication, and the only reply necessary to anything Mr. R. may have written or propagated against me, is to desire proof of his assertions. Mr. John Lloyd, of South Carolina, was a witness of all that passed at Nantes. He is going over

soon to Congress, and I have no doubt will speak the truth if called upon.

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TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PARIS, March 23d, 1778.

*Sir:*

To the enclosed copy of my last\* be pleased to refer. I have the pleasing satisfaction of congratulating you and my country on the independency of the thirteen United States of America being now openly acknowledged by the Court of France, which must soon put a glorious end to all our troubles. About fourteen days ago the French Minister in London formally avowed to the British Ministry the treaty which His Most Christian Majesty had made with you, and on the 20th instant your Commissioners were, in form, introduced to the King and his Ministers at Versailles, as the representatives of a sovereign State, and on Sun-

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\* "I am not in much spirit to write, for the prospect of things is far from being agreeable. The public news is that the French ambassador has left London; that Lord Stormont leaves Paris to-morrow morning without taking leave, and that to-morrow the American Commissioners are to be publicly presented to the K. at Versailles. A blind man may almost see the issue of all these things." *William Lee to Edward Browne*, 19 March, 1778. The Marquis de Noailles left London on the 20th, "not without some slight expression of ill humor from John Bull." Lord Stormont arrived a few days later, and had an audience with the King on the 27th.

day last they were introduced to the Queen and all the royal family.

The British Ministry, as usual, have blustered a good deal, but have not ventured to declare war, that we know of. If they do, our business may the sooner and better be finished. I set off tomorrow for Germany, where the prospect of a war between Austria and Prussia seems to thicken, although this Court uses all its influence to prevent one, and has explicitly declared to both parties that she will not in any manner aid or assist either side, as she is determined to exert all her force in supporting her new alliance with the States of America. I have already claimed the King of Prussia's promise to acknowledge our independence as soon as France has done so; his answer I shall meet in Germany, and, as far as one can judge at present, there is a greater probability of my being sooner openly received at Berlin than at Vienna; but on this head, and at this critical moment, it is impossible for any man in the world to form a decisive opinion, because the issue will depend on events that are yet in the womb of time; therefore, all that is in prudence for me to do is, on the spot, to seize the first opening that is made on either side in our favor; and I shall take care to give you the earliest intelligence of every thing material that occurs in my department.

I have the honor to remain, &c.

TO SAMUEL THORPE. [?]

FRANKFORT, 11 April, [1778.]

*My dear Sir:*

'Tis a long while since I had y<sup>e</sup> pleasure of hearing from you, nor can I well account for the loss of one letter from you that I was informed about six weeks ago should have come by the French ambassador's courier. Several others, particularly one from L. S., that were put in y<sup>e</sup> same channel never came to my hands. I cannot well conceive any other motive for this conduct but the French minister's suspicion that I was at heart too much attached to y<sup>e</sup> good old country and people, and wished if it was possible to bring about an accommodation with Am——a before they had completed their schemes, and therefore they were desirous to know what kind of correspondence I had. The independence of America is now established beyond revocation; but her trade and affection for Great Britain may yet in a great measure be retained, if the British ministry have but common honesty and common sense enough to take advantage of the passing moment, by adopting instantly the sage advice in all its parts as given by y<sup>e</sup> Duke of Richmond lately in the House of Lords, adding to it an act of general oblivion for what has passed everywhere, and giving every subject of y<sup>e</sup> United States a right of citizenship in Great Britain, and every other part of the British

Dominions; at the same time giving up all hostile designs against France. America, thus left to her own feelings, I am convinced would do as much as any honest Englishman could wish. At least for myself, I can truly say that I would instantly forego every other object and pursuit to labor at accomplishing a happy issue to the unnatural quarrel, provided I saw the proper basis lay'd by act of Parliament, and a cabinet established in which one might reasonably expect to meet with fair and upright dealing; but I must say that in my opinion Lords Temple and Shelburne are as little to be trusted as Lords Mansfield and North. If the above plan is not adopted, and instantly too, I do not think it within the chapter of possibilities that Great Britain can be saved from utter perdition. If war at this time takes place against France, common sense tells us that America must of necessity join the latter, in which case Great Britain *alone* will have to contend against France, Spain and America, when she is already more exhausted than she ever was by any former wars; and France and Spain more vigorous than at any period for near 100 years past. Things so situated, what possible chance can there be of Great Britain retaining one single possession without the island, if she goes to war with France, all this being so plain that it is impossible for the meanest comprehension to have a doubt about it. There-

fore I cannot help hoping that the plan of peace will be speedily and seriously adopted, which will bring happiness. I still retain the hopes of embracing all my friends with you, 'till which happy period I beg them to accept my warmest and most grateful wishes. However, if at any time, you and those who have the best right to speak desire that to be returned which they gave, I shall ever think myself bound to obey their commands. . . . I presume M—y's motion about the C—y seal arose from a concerted plan to assert the right to control the H—I proceedings and estates. By refusing to let the seal be applyed, taking care to choose as proper an occasion as possible, you may bring the point to a decision, and it will always be better to be on the defensive than the offensive. I wonder that W—ge being on y<sup>e</sup> spot, or his man W—h, does not think of a mandamus to compel the wicked and infamous bookseller to show cause, if he or his adherents have any, for such extraordinary conduct. These miscreants have nearly run their race, but I fear they will not get to the end until they have totally ruined their country. All the European world seem to be on the eve of falling together by the ears, but still there is some hopes of peace, tho' indeed they are very small.

. . . .

TO EDMUND JENINGS.

FRANKFORT SUR LE MAINE, 11 April, [1778].

. . . We hear of nothing here but war, which will be a great interruption to commerce. Had it not been for this, trade with y<sup>e</sup> spring would have borne a most lively appearance; but now, one hardly knows where to turn for fear of being involved in some difficulty on one side or other, since the two champions of Christendom are on the point of measuring swords with no little personal animosity against each other. This country is in a most dreadful situation, being on the eve of a war which seems almost inevitable, and if once commenced promises to be the most bloody and desolating that Europe has known for this century past. Each of the combatants have now in the field above 200,000 of y<sup>e</sup> finest troops, well appointed, and commanded by the ablest generals now in Europe. It is pleasant to observe the pompous account in the London papers of the reception of the rebel agents at Versailles, and the tete-a-tete conversation between the French king and Dr. F—. These things must make you and I laugh. However, a gentleman of credit, who was present out of curiosity, tells me that he was at y<sup>e</sup> king's side when they were introduced, and that he said to Dr. F. "he might assure the Congress of his friendship;" to which the arch Rebel replied, "that his Majesty might rely on their

faithful adherence to their engagements." After which he retired into another room. The French say their King is as steady in adhering to his word, as our most gracious sovereign is firm in adhering to his purposes. This indeed he gives some proof of, by an unshaken attachment to the minister of his choice, which all the intrigues of the most intriguing court in Europe cannot shake. Notwithstanding the perilous situation of Great Britain, is it not astonishing to see the lethargy that possesses every individual, even when particular ruin stares them all in the face? Lord S—— has now proved himself in y<sup>e</sup> face of y<sup>e</sup> world, what you and I always tho't him. . . . \*

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\* In letters from this time, William Lee employed no less than four different cyphers. Two, which were based upon a transposition of the alphabet, I have succeeded in decyphering. A third, in which a system of numbers were used to denote persons, places and certain transactions, I have only partially completed, as the material at hand has not proved sufficiently full to give me the whole. The fourth system has baffled all my efforts to solve it. It was probably based upon some dictionary, or similar book, and so each word has a separate and distinct symbol. For example: 110 a xxviii. would represent a word, the letter between the figures being *a* or *b*, and the Roman figures never going above xxxviii. These circumstances led me to conjecture that the book on which the cypher was based was a dictionary printed in double columns. The first numeral referred to the page (which might be any where before or after the real one on which the word intended was to be found); the letter told whether it was in the first or second column: and the Roman showed the position from the top or bottom of the

TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT, 23 April [1778].

*My dear Sir:*

Many thanks for the communications of the 14th and 16th, which came together yesterday; that mentioned containing the substance of the letters to me is not yet arrived, and I suspect it is still in the Post-office at Paris, for want of franking.

I could wish all from *America*\* to be forwarded here except that from the Committee, of which a literal copy may be sent. The original may at present be more useful with you; but I would have a copy sent to Mr. Bondfield, who may probably be as much plagued with Deane's emissaries, Delap and the little pert Scotchman, McC[reer]y,† as Mr. S[chweighauser] is likely to be with Mr. W[illiams], for no doubt R[oss] will be as busy there, as he has been at Nantes. I always told you that W[illiams]

column. No work that has been placed under my notice will supply the key, and the little "red book," mentioned in one of the letters, is too indefinite a term to point to any one work. From the fact that Entick's *New Spelling Dictionary* was used by the Secret Committee of Correspondence for its cypher, I thought that Lee used the same; but I have been unable to discover a copy of an edition prior to 1783, and that one will not fit the symbols. I print such words as were written in cypher in the original, italicized.

\* Italicized words were written in cypher.

† William McCreery had insinuated to John Adams that "the Lees were selfish, and that this was a family misfortune."

had neither sense or judgment, tho' he has a tolerable share of low cunning and a kind of seeming good-natured plausibility; which is fully proved by his suffering himself to be made a cat's paw of by R[oss].\*

I think it would be quite proper on the letter from the Committee to apply to the old fox [Franklin] for the certificate before requested, which being signed by all three, and sent to S[chweighauser], would completely crush all the dirty Scotch pedler's intrigues.

The old buck would be puzzled to find out an excuse for refusing to sign such a certificate, especially if it is asked in the presence of *Adams*, and it is ready prepared for signing to prevent being put off for want of time, &c. If he does, the plot in favor of the nephew will be made manifest.

As to proving the plots of *Deane*, I should think great caution ought to be used, as 'tis most probable the exculpation, and indeed applause, may be over before the charges can be got to the scene of action; tho' if any thing decisive can be got at, no time should be lost in conveying it.† In my mind

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\* For a sharp letter to Ross from the Commissioners see *John Adams*, III., 152.

† Arthur Lee placed himself in an awkward position by a letter to Grand, the banker, directing him to accept no bills or pay out any money to the credit of the commissioners without

there is no doubt of the criminality of *Franklin*. He will therefore use every wile to ensnare your circumspection; therefore it is requisite to lull as much as possible the suspicion natural to a cunning and guilty mind, unless a solid and effectual blow can be made; and I am sure it will be wise not to hurry *Adams* too much; to lead his ideas as softly as possible may be well, but if I am not mistaken in his character, he will not be driven, and has too high a sense of himself, to take up hastily the opinions of others. Carmichael is so complete a wretch that there is no depending on what he may do; but I apprehend that *Deane* will reap no inconsiderable benefit from a strict union with M[orri]s, being characters pretty similar; and there can be little doubt of the latter intriguing to get R[oss] appointed. In this he might be disappointed if L[y]l[o]yd would go over immediately, and could get to *Congress* before M[orri]s' leave of absence expires, which will not be till the last of June, especially if a recommendation for him could be got from *Adams*. Consult with *Izard* immediately on this, as no time is to be lost, and if 'tis not approved I don't know a fitter person to set on this business than J[ohnso]n of M[arylan]d, who

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a joint order; and to deliver all letters addressed to Deane, to the Commissioners. Franklin did not fall into the trap, and his reply may be found in his *Works*, VI., 176.

came to Paris with S. D.\* the 15th of March. It was a capital stroke in *Deane & Franklin* to get 6† to go; the measure surprises much every one in this quarter. The stealing the letters I am inclined to impute to the two you mention, and not to Hynson.‡ I do not recollect any of mine but a

\* Simeon Deane.

† This seems to refer to Beaumarchais, or one of his agents, perhaps Holker.

‡ Hynson "received Deane's letter of the 7th of October (being then fitting out a ship) at Havre de Grace, with the Congress dispatches which were directed to Folger and *him*, and Folger being ready and willing to sail away with them immediately, he Hynson took an opportunity of sending Folger out upon some business in the Docks while he slipping off the string, which was intended to secure the end of the packet, he got possession of the dispatches, that I have had (I hope to be right in saying) the happiness of delivering to you, and then making up paper, equal in length and thickness to what he had taken out, he dexterously filling up the vacancy, shut up the end of the bundle, passed back again the same string, and upon Folger's returning with a Mr. Moyland, he had the bundle well cover'd, put in a bag, seal'd and delivered it to Folger, in presence of Moyland, never to be given again out of Folger's hands (unless to be thrown overboard in case of meeting with one of our ships, or in the hands of those they are directed for). Hynson then set off next morning for Dieppe, got over last night to London." *Lt. Col. Edward Smith to William Eden*, 20 October, 1777. Deane soon discovered Hynson's treason, for a letter of his to Hynson dated Paris, October 26, was intercepted in the mails. He said "I do not write you to reproach you for the ungrateful and treacherous part you have acted; I leave this to your own reflections.

short one to the President of Congress, of no importance, and perhaps a short one to R. H. Lee; from the last letter of *Deane* to me, I am convinced that all our letters sent to P[ass]y have been open'd at least, if not detained; therefore I would advise copies of all that are material to be sent, and a copy of Simeon Deane's receipt for such as he had to carry; for there is too much reason to believe that they were all opened, if not entirely secreted.

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But as you have had the assurance to write to me, and to propose the betraying your new patrons, in the manner you have wickedly but in vain attempted to betray your former, and with them your country, I must tell you that no letter from you will hereafter be received by

DEANE."

"No doubt but you have seen or heard from Hynson, as I met him going into London, as I was coming out. Happy for him that he left Paris the time he did, as there was an order issued for apprehending him on suspicion that he was a spy from your court on the court of France." *Lupton to Eden*, 31 December, 1777.

"You will see the facts attending my enquiry into the robbery of the despatches, which should have been carried by Folger. Comparing and connecting all things together, it is my private judgment that this Mr. Chaumont was employed by the 243 a xvii to take the public despatches; and that he availed himself of the opportunity to take my letters for Mr. Deane and Dr. Bancroft, with whom he was in close connection." *Arthur Lee to James Lovell*, 3 June, 1778.

On January 11, 1778, Captain John Folger arrived at York, bringing packets for Congress from the Commissioners at Paris, which on being opened, were found to contain "only an enclosure of clean paper, with some familiar letters, none of which contained any political intelligence."

You know that Penet has already settled his accounts with me, and since his leaving Gruel and joining with D'Acosta, the business of the house seems to be carried on with regularity and in a merchant-like manner.

The resolution, with respect to Burgoyne should be published in England ; but those relative to Independence I think for the present, had better be withheld.—Pray send me here the most correct list you can get, of the present members of Congress, and the several Committees ; also a copy of the last Articles of Confederation drawn up by Congress.

[The minister] of *Prussia* has been here and by desire *W. Lee* waits till [an answer] can come from *Berlin*, so that there will not be any motion from hence, till the next month begins.

Will it not be a good political stroke to give out among the Commercial powers, that the United States will not trade with those who do not immediately acknowledge their Independency ?

*France* may at once decide either *Vienna*, or *Berlin*, by speaking a little plainly, but while nothing is said to either, both will be afraid of *Great Britain*. For my own part I think in policy on every account France should decide for 18,\* but in this perhaps it will not be well to stir, until you hear from me again.

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\* Berlin? The usual symbol was 8, but the sense points to Berlin.

War is not yet commenced in this country, that we know of. The armies are assembled not very far from each other; and the Generals on each side with them; so that we may expect every day some important news from the North. Desire F. to show you my letter to him, if you have not seen it already.—All here desire their best love to you and L[udwel]l whose good fame had reached this before we came. Remember us to Radswill and his host.

Adieu, and believe me always most sincerely

Yrs

RIP LINDSAY,

Give the earliest notice when there is a design of going to *Spain*, and say is there any alteration of *A. Lee's* powers in *France*.\*

\* "I hope as my countrymen have now got rid of that nest of vermin the North Britons (who not only sucked the heart's-blood out of our particular country, but have unquestionably been the occasion of all the heavy mischiefs that have fallen on America), will pay more attention to trade than they formerly did, and keep it in their own hands, for they should consider that the occupation of a merchant in a commercial country, is as honorable as any other in ye society. A North Briton is something like the stinking and troublesome weed we call in Virginia wild onion. Wherever one is permitted to fix, the number soon increases so fast, that it is extremely difficult to eradicate them, and they poison the ground so, that no wholesome plant can thrive." *William Lee to Raleigh Colston, 30 April, 1778.*

TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT SUR LE MAIN, 30 April [1778].

*My dear Sir :*

To-morrow I expect to hear from you at least to receive a letter that layed some time in the Paris postoffice for want of being franked.

On reflecting about the dispatches that have been stolen, I have not a doubt of its being done by *Deane* and that *Carmichael* knows it at least, but most likely was as much concerned in the act as the other. Tho' *Dr. Franklin* may know the whole, no eclaircissement is to be expected from him; on the contrary every finesse will be used to conceal the Truth unless he finds *Adams* determined to find out the whole. It will be proper to know from Lim[oz]in the precise day that Hynson went off; if he went away before they got to H. he can't be even suspected. I tho't it extremely odd at the time, but I remember perfectly well that the countenance of *Carmichael* expressed great and secret pleasure when the news first came to P[ari]s of Hynson's being gone off, instead of resentment or anger. Again it will be proper to trace every hand through which the packets went until they came to Folger,† and if not too late, they should on the other side carefully compare the blank paper that was put in the covers instead of the letters, with the paper on which the letters

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\* Captain John Folger.

of *Deane* and *Franklin* were written, or enclosed. Also the same thing should be done with respect to the letters of *Carmichael* and 11; for if on examination the blank paper is the same with either of the others, the mystery will then be very plain. For as there is a very material difference in paper which is easily discernible by a skillful or attentive observer, 'twill not be very probable that exactly the same kind, in texture, thickness, largeness, color and marks should be found in places so distant. There is a considerable difference even in the shades of white paper, when compared together.

Are the despatches gone that I left with you, and by whom? When do you send any more? If *W. Lee* should not be properly received at *Vienna*, in case the course should be bent that way, do you think he ought to remain there, to wait the course of events? Perhaps it may not be improper to stay and the point of indignity may be got over from the mistake in the *commission*. No decided resolution can be taken yet for some days in consequence of what was communicated the 23<sup>d</sup>, but as far as any judgment can be formed at present, *Vienna* will be the course at last. However, advice will be given as soon as any determination is made. I observe since *Adams* came, the *puffs* of *Franklin* and *Deane* in the 50\* *papers* have ceased. This

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\* English?

proceeds from the *cunning* of *Franklin*, who is afraid of giving offence until his *nett* is *wove*.

Stockings, shoes and coarse cloths can be got much cheaper here, when delivered in *Holland* than with you ; blankets also much better and something cheaper. Is such ample provision made else where as to render the sending any from hence unnecessary. I have but a very small fund in my power to lay out ; but I am sure 100,000 livres might be employed here to great advantage, which would fully compleat from head to foot with a blanket for each, 2,000 m. Give me an answer to this per first post, directed here. I see nothing is yet particularized about the Free Ports ; as was desired, I frequently mention'd them to R. H. L. He will think strange of me when he comes to read 30. You should touch on the business, tho' there is no necessity for hinting about what I have said about a particular being *consul*. We have all little coughs, but hope they will pass over ; tho' we have a memento of eternity every day, for almost daily, one, sometimes 2 or 3, go by our window to the church yard.

Our last post from London missed; so that we have nothing new from that quarter. The Heroes in the north have been each some weeks at the head of their respective armies, which are assembled within a day's march of each other, and no blow struck that we hear of. Indeed the strongest

rumor is peace; and that the King of P[russia] is to have Dantzig and something else to indemnify him; I should not be surprised if Bremen and Verden were added, on which perhaps he has as just a claim as the El[ecto]r of H[anove]r.

Respects to all with you, and receive our best wishes. Adieu. I. McCULLOCH.

P. S. It will be well to get as much in writing as possible, relative to Mr. W[illiam]s' proceedings at Nantes, because one day or other it may tend to illustrate some other proceedings.

Pray do not let my letters lay open or be exposed to every inquisitive eye. I may sometimes write to you from the Book.\*

"\*'Tis strange how secrets get out. The secret mission of Th[oronto]n and his commission is all blown here, tho' kept so secret at Ch[aillo]t. We have the particulars of Pultney's negotiation at P[assy]. The particulars of Destaing's fleet, its sailing and the passengers, were known at Westminster the 19th April—quick work indeed. About 2000 men, recruits and all, have gone this year from Germany to America. The last division, about 800 are probably just sailing now from Portsmouth." *William Lee to Arthur Lee(?)*, May, 1778. Major Thornton had been sent to England by Franklin to transact some business relating to American prisoners in British gaols. Pultney had come to Paris late in March to lay certain propositions of reconciliation with America before Franklin, who at once communicated them to the French ministry. Gérard took with him to America a copy of these propositions, which Franklin said "would probably have been accepted, if they had been made two years ago."



TO THE AMERICAN COMMISSIONERS AT THE COURT  
OF FRANCE.

FRANKFORT ON THE MAINE, 8 May, 1778.

*Gentlemen:*

I have been detained here longer than was intended by a personal application from one of the King of Prussia's ministers. I have now received an answer from Berlin, which informs me that his Majesty chooses for the present to decline acknowledging the Independency of the United States, or to enter into a commercial treaty; consequently my route is fixed for Vienna, where, if I am not wrong inform'd, an application from the French ministry will easily induce that Court to comply with the wishes of Congress; especially if the application is made while the affairs in Germany continue in their present state of suspence.

It will be of essential service in the direction of my movements for me to know what measures the French ministry intend to take in this business, for which I must rely upon you to inform me. The safest way will be to send your letter under cover to Messrs. Bathman Frere, Banquiers in this Town, from whence it will be forwarded to me, and perhaps be less liable to meet with any interruption than if sent by the post direct from Paris to Vienna. As the negotiations between the Emperor and King of Prussia still continue, many are of the opinion that at last an accommodation will

take place, instead of war. I have the honor to be with great esteem, gentlemen, your most obedient and very humble servant.

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TO RALPH IZARD.

F[RAKFOR]T, 10 May, 1778.

I wrote to you the 19th and 30th ulto, which I presume you received. A decisive determination is come from 18, [Berlin?] where nothing can be done at present, nor do I think much ever will unless 'tis dearly paid for. I am well informed that the *King of Prussia* is to [form] *a confederacy of all the northern powers against [ ]* 47\*; in which England *is to be included*. This object will hardly be completed, but still *France* should look well to it. You may depend upon the fact relative to the plan. To-morrow I intend to set out for *Vienna*, where everything depends on the *French court*. One line from 113 will make everything go on smoothly, but without it, very little can be expected in the present situation of things. You will, therefore, I am sure, do all in your power to forward the necessary measures from that quarter. I have wrote to the *ministers*. What they will do, I can't tell, not knowing the trim since *John Adams* was added, and *Deane* subtracted; but un-

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\* Russia?

less *Franklin* is counteracted, I am not to expect anything, unless he has some private end to answer.

The Duke de Choiseul can do much in my station, knowing the trim of everything there, a letter from him, if it could be got, would be of much use. . . . What hopes have you from the Dr. and Temple's mission? Has there really been any contentions in South Carolina as mentioned in the English papers? . . . Be cautious in mentioning what is said above about the *King of Prussia*, lest it should injure our affairs; tho' the *court of France* should know it.

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THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO  
WILLIAM LEE.

YORK, May 14th, 1778.

Sir:

Your favors of November 24th and December 18th, reached us only the 2d of this month, with the letters of our other friends at Paris, from whom we had not received a regular packet for eleven months. You will readily conceive how much we have wished to hear from you, and how very agreeable your information would have been at an earlier period. It is evident that you were yourself in a degree of doubt as to the conduct of France, even after the conference of our Commissioners in December; you will, therefore, be naturally led to give us due credit for the resolute manner in which we proceeded upon the two draughts

of bills which the British Ministry had hurried over to America. Be assured we were acquainted with the spirit of the French Court. The decisive part it has taken was really unexpected, judging from the accounts we had collected from travellers. The dates of the papers herewith sent will enable you to put this matter in a clear point of view.

The turn of affairs in Europe will make it needless for us to attempt the finesse of recruiting in Germany, which you hint at, and which would have a good effect in case of necessity. Mr. Arthur Lee's letters make it quite probable that your commission will prove successful at Berlin, and there appears the best agreement between the King of Prussia and the Emperor.

The enclosed resolve of Congress, of the 7th instant, will show their intentions with regard to your support, which was not properly attended to when your commission was made out.\*

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\* "May 7th, 1778. *Resolved*, That the Commissioners appointed for the Courts of Spain, Tuscany, Vienna, and Berlin, should live in such style and manner at their respective Courts as they may find suitable and necessary to support the dignity of their public character; keeping an account of their expenses, which shall be reimbursed by the Congress of the United States of America;

"That besides the actual expenses of the Commissioners, a handsome allowance be made to each of them as a compensation for their services;

"That the Commissioners of the other Courts in Europe be empowered to draw bills of exchange from time to time, for the amount of their expenses upon the Commissioners at the Court of France."

Other papers herewith sent will give you a general idea of our situation. You may be assured that independence is firmly adopted by the States, and the unanimity of Congress is truly emblematic of all America. Nova Scotia has long ago expressed its wishes to be adopted by us, and now afresh solicits. Canada will be greatly affected by the news of our alliance with its former parent State. In short, sir, every thing which could be added to our own determination of being free and independent, is ensured by this éclaircissement of the Court of Versailles. Our army is growing daily, so that if we are to negotiate with Britain, we shall do it in a proper posture. There are some reports of her drawing away her troops that she may with a better grace enter into parley. But this must be done without disguise, or no treaty can be held; surely no one can suppose that we shall now give up a point which we had made a preliminary before we knew what powerful friendship was secured to us in Europe.

The powers which had been given to our Commissioners in France, and our great anxiety to keep perfect faith in treaties, induced a caution with regard to the powers given in after appointments, which is now become unnecessary. Perfect equality being the basis of our present treaties, without any exclusive privileges to France, there can be no chance of discontent from the conclusion of similar treaties with other Powers of Europe; therefore, we shall doubtless soon forward to you more full powers than were sent with your commission. As you seem to think it may be advantage-

ous to have a cypher for a correspondence, we would propose the same which has been mentioned to Dr Franklin formerly, by Mr. Lovell, and this is the rather chosen because it may serve between the Doctor and you, or any number of your friends, taking a different key-word for each.

We are, with great regard, &c.,

R. H. LEE,  
JAMES LOVELL,  
ROBERT MORRIS.

P. S. You are to have a plenipotentiary commission with instructions, *not* limiting the term of the proposed treaties of amity and commerce.

JOHN ADAMS.

The arrival of John Adams in April, introduced a new element into the commission, that promised at first to increase the differences existing among the members. While at Bordeaux he was informed by William McCreery, of "a dryness" that subsisted among Franklin, Deane and Lee, and was exceedingly disquieted by accounts of the rancorous animosity shown, that had divided the ministers and all connected with them into parties. Franklin also, at a very early moment, spoke to him of the "coolness" between the American ministers, and described Lee's anxious, uneasy temper, Izard's violent and ungoverned passions, and the disputes they had caused,—embarrassments to which William Lee had contributed not a little. After being presented at court, Adams

determined to accomplish something towards introducing system into the conduct of the commercial agencies. On the 13th of April, four letters were sent out by the commissioners. Ross was informed that he could not have any further advances, and must account for the money already sent him. Williams was directed to incur no further expenses, and to close his accounts for the present with as little expense as possible. Mercklé, a Dutchman, was somewhat brusquely told to expect nothing more at the hands of the ministers, and a merely formal letter of thanks was sent to Bondfield. (*John Adams' Works*, III., 128, 129.) Of William Lee, Adams wrote that he "had been a merchant in London, and I believe an alderman, had been appointed by Congress their commercial agent and a general superintendent of all their commercial affairs. Congress was our sovereign law-giver, prince, and judge, and, therefore, whatever, was done by their express authority, we, as I believed, ought to respect and obey. Mr. William Lee had appointed Mr. Schweighauser commercial agent for the United States, under him, and Mr. Schweighauser was a very solid merchant, highly esteemed by every body, and highly approved by the court. Mr. Jonathan Williams, a relation of Dr. Franklin, whom I had known in Boston, as well as his father, uncle, and cousin, who was a clerk in my office, I had the best disposition to favor, as far the public service and my own sense of propriety would permit. Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane had employed him in transactions which appeared to me to be commercial, and, in this,

had differed with Mr. Arthur Lee, and interfered with the province of Mr. William Lee. I therefore, united with Mr. Lee in this and many subsequent proceedings, requiring the settlement of Mr. Williams's accounts. Dr. Franklin, finding that two of us were agreed in opinion, subscribed the letter with us."

But Adams soon discovered that his attempts at reform, however well-meant, were not crowned with the success he anticipated. "Whatever was done or said by Dr. Franklin, or by me when I agreed with him in opinion, was censured and often misrepresented by one party; and whatever was done or said by Mr. Lee or Mr. Izard, and by me, when I thought they were in the right, was at least equally censured and misrepresented by the other. I was so thoroughly disgusted with the service, and so fully convinced that our whole system was wrong, and that ruin to our affairs abroad, and great danger and confusion to those at home, must be the consequence of it, that I thought it my indispensable duty to represent my ideas in America." He therefore wrote to Samuel Adams, 21 May, 1778, representing that one minister at Paris would be sufficient, he should have no connection with the commercial affairs of Congress, and his salary should be determined, and not left an uncertainty. (*Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, II, 540). A few days after Arthur Lee added the weight of his advice: "I am of opinion, with my colleague, Mr. Adams, that it would be better for the public that the appointment of your public ministers were fixed, instead of being left at large, and their expences indefinite. From experience,

I find the expense of living in that character cannot well be less than three thousand pounds sterling a year, which I believe is as little as is allowed to any public minister beyond the rank of consul" *To the President of Congress*, 1 June, 1778. And Franklin also wrote 22 July, 1778. These letters doubtless contributed much to the changes in the foreign commissions made by Congress in September, 1778; but the salary of the ministers was not fixed till 4 October, 1779, when a minister was allowed £2500 sterling a year, and his secretary £1000.

In the meanwhile the powers given to Williams were revoked (25 May, 1778), Schweighauser recognized as agent under William Lee, a rap administered to John Paul Jones, and Ross and Bondfield ordered to render accounts. The letters were written by Adams, and signed by Franklin "composedly;" and the report was that Adams had gone over to the Lee faction.

" . . . Does the appearance of *Adams* make any alteration in the powers of *A. Lee* in *France*? Is every thing right in *Spain*, and is there any prospect of going there soon? It will be of essential service in directing the judgment and conduct of *W. Lee* with respect to himself, if he could but know particularly the present situation and influence of *Robert Morris* in *Congress* and *America*, and whether R. H. L. and Loudoun are likely to continue as before. Also what 142 [Ross?] is doing at N[antes]." *William Lee to Arthur Lee*, 3 June, 1778.

John Adams was not a bitter opponent of Deane. He questioned the wisdom of some of Deane's acts. ✓

and believed that America had not received a full equivalent for the "immense sum of money" that was gone or owing. "If I had been strongly against Mr. Deane, I should certainly avow it and make no secret of it at all. I have never been used to disguise my sentiments of men whom I have been against in public life, and I certainly should not begin with Mr. Deane, who is not and never was a man of importance enough to make me deviate from a rule that I have observed all my life, viz., when obliged to be a man's enemy, to be openly and generously so." *Adams to William McCreery, 25 September, 1778.* He admitted that Deane was "active, diligent, subtle, and successful, having accomplished the great purpose of his mission to advantage."

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TO CONGRESS.\*

[VIENNA, 30 May, 1778.]

\* \* \* The undecided and critical situation of affairs [at] this moment between the King of Prussia and the House of Austria, he knew would prevent this Court from taking any open part with us in a hurry, for fear of throwing the weight of G. B. into the scale of Prussia; therefore he was of opinion, that I should not hastily take upon myself in publick the character with which I am vested; but remain for a time as an American Traveller;

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\* From a much mutilated letter book. I presume the letter was written to Congress or to one of its committees.

in short to act as your commissioners did for above a year at the Court of France. Accordingly he has introduced me as a traveller to the Minister, all the great officers of State, ladies of the Court, and all the foreign ambassadors and ministers, except from G. B., and Hanover, and I have reason to believe that some progress will be made, in getting the better of the strong penchant that has prevailed for many years in this court for G. B., with which there has been the strongest alliances for near a century against the House of Bourbon, except in the last war.

My first object shall be to obstruct as much as possible the operations of G. B. in hiring more German troops; in which I flatter myself with having already had some success with the Princes of H. D. and of B. D., at whose courts I have been for that purpose. The British agents are however at this moment busily employed among all the petty princes in this country to get more subsidiary men and recruits for their army in America; which, with sending Governor Johnstone, the secret, tho' devoted, agent of Lords Bute and Mansfield, as one of the Commissioners to treat with you, show incontestably what little sincerity there is in the B[ritish] M[inistry], and how little they are to be trusted.

The Emperor and King of Prussia are now, and have been for some weeks, on the confines of their

dominions in Silesia, each of them with upwards of 100,000 men, and the largest quantity of artillery that has ever before been brought together. They are within a few hours march of each other, and tho' their troops are in cantonments, they are so disposed, that they can be encamped in two days time. This great object close at home, engages the attention of all the politicians in this country, and until the contest between these two mighty Monarchs about the Bavarian succession is settled in a solid peace, or bursts out in flaming war, our business must necessarily move slowly. I shall, however, watch every favorable opportunity of accomplishing the wishes of Congress. I have the honor &c.

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TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

V[IEENNA], 30 May, [1778.]

The last date I have received from you was that of June last from Williamsburg and G[reen] S[pring]. 'Tis probable your letters to me have met with the same fate that mine have to you and C—ss. The nest of wretches that were guilty of that and other dirty work are now somewhat dispersed, but still the oldest is left, who can breed mischief enough for twenty worlds. I have so often mentioned two of the characters, that you can hardly be at a loss to know who I mean.

I shall be much mistaken if Congress gets any satisfaction from the inquiry they have ordered to be made relative to the loss of the letters that ought to have been carried by Capt. Folger in October last. You should have received by that conveyance one from me, and Congress another. I have no doubt in my own mind of the parties that intercepted and stopped them, but as it will be difficult for me to bring the proof home, I shall say no more.

I have wrote fully to Congress of this date, but as I have not received any letters from America for a long time, I cannot judge whether you will be at Congress when mine gets there. Therefore, will give you some account of the state of affairs in this country. On the Duke of B—a's death in December last, the Elector Palatine as heir, ought to have succeeded to all his dominions. But the male line of B—a was extinct, the house of Au—a [claimed] part as fiefs in reversion to that house, and in January a [treaty] was signed between the Emperor and Elector Palatine, settling a partition, when we thought that everything would pass w[ithout] noise.\* But the Duke de Deux Ponts, who is heir

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\* Maximilian Joseph represented the younger line of the house of Wittelsbach, and by his death that line became extinct. The next heir was Charles Theodore, the Elector Palatine, and representative of the elder line of Wittelsbach. The claim of Austria was desisted from on her obtaining from Bavaria the frontier district which bears the name of Sunviertel, or the quarter of the sun.

with [ ], who is old and without children, would not agree to this partition. [Where]upon the Kings of F—ce, Pru—a, Sweden, Denmark, and [other] powers, that were guarantees of the treaty of Westphalia [ ] of P has taken up the affair. F & S, as yet, decline interfering [ ] mediators. The E. and K. of P. have collected their armies, each above 100,000 men, and the largest quantity of artillery that was ever bro't together, on the confines of their dominions in Silesia, within a few miles distance of each other. They have been thus situated for above six weeks, and, as no blow has been struck, the world suppose the time has been spent in negotiation, and what will be the issue nobody can tell. The emperor has already raised 40,000 recruits to complete his army, and within these few days, orders have been issued for raising 30,000 more, which has not a very peaceable aspect. In this situation you may be assured that both parties are trying their utmost skill to engage G. B. on their side, which will of course for a time prevent either from acknowledging our Independence. But I have reason to think that as soon as this great object is resolved into a solid peace or dreadful war, one, if not both these powers, will openly avow their attachment to us. In the meantime I must wait with patience, and do what is possible to obstruct the negotiations of G. B. for more German troops to send to America, in which her agents are very

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busy at this moment; which shows how little good they expect from their Commissioners that they have sent out to negotiate a peace with America. Before this unlucky event here, the K. of P. professed much friendship for us, and had promised to acknowledge our Independence as soon as France had done so. But now he declines it for the present, as the affairs of Germany require all his attention, and he has no marine to support such an acknowledgment. Mankind is a strange animal. The country, people and all, for which this mighty contest is likely to be waged by the E. and K. of P., if put up to sale to morrow, would not sell for half the money that has already been spent.

Mr. Adams has been arrived two months, and I have not yet received the last Articles of Confederation. Be so good as to have sent me by every express that is dispatched, such proceedings of Congress for the last and present year, as are permitted to be known; with a list of that body, and the several committees, marking in the margin the time that each member can serve according to your Constitution.

Governor Henry, I understand, has sent over a person to France with orders for me to buy arms and ammunition for the State of Virginia to the value of one million of livres, about £44,000 sterling, but I do not hear that he has sent any regular authority from the State to borrow the money;

without which, you know, the goods cannot be  
b't, and indeed it will be a difficult task at present  
to borrow so large a sum, even if the authority  
from the State was distinct and regular. But I  
hope our credit will increase every day, and in the  
meantime we must try what our good friends, the  
French ministry, will do for us. The State of  
Georgia, tho' so much younger in business than  
Virginia, sent over a person last winter on the  
same business, with powers very clear and regular.  
If, contrary to all appearances, the British troops  
should this campaign meet with any signal success,  
we may have another year of war: but according  
to every reasonable judgment, this will prove the  
last. \* \* \*

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

V[ENICE], 10 June, 1778.

*Dear Sir:*

Thanks for yours of the 29th ulto. Three letters  
before this have been written to you from hence.  
The weather in this quarter has not changed for  
the better; it lowers a good deal. We shall, how-  
ever, wait a little to see what course it will take.  
The American war seems to engage conversation  
much more than the differences in this country.  
Like the climates, one is free for all the world, and  
the other is a sacred arcana, that none but the

priesthood are permitted to know or even to talk about. However, there is no war yet here, tho' the immense preparations on both sides are continued with equal activity and vigor. I have noted the admirals. We are all impatient to hear what is become of 158. 57 [Count D'Estaing?]. The earliest intelligence will be acceptable. Not a word of Nicholson, Green, &c., &c. . . . I am glad to hear that *John Adams* goes on well. He must be let to lead, or at least to think he does so. Remember the maxims of De Retz and Clarendon's character of Hambden. From hints dropped here, I fancy *Franklin* has planned to be fixed alone where he is, which is to be accomplished by *Beaumarchais* and *Deane*. Penet should first send the goods for the State of Virginia that he engaged to do last September, which was not done, or even thought of when I left N[antes] last. Some people unhappily are too ready to engage without ever afterwards thinking of the execution. Our best chance will be with the *Court of France*. Apply there by all means, and if successful I will execute the . . .

TO ARTHUR LEE.

VIENNA, 20 June, 1778.

*Dear Sir,*

This moment was received a letter of the 4th or 6th (I can't tell which) that ought in regular course

to have been here 4 days ago,—thanks for the intelligence, tho' the situation of A—d is greatly to be lamented.

I predict that nothing material will occur this year, in America, as a resolution of Congress I have seen will certainly prevent Washington's army from being complete. I suppose Cap<sup>t</sup> Le M.\* will soon return from St[rasbur]g; he has written and sent me the prices of some things, which show that we cannot have anything to do there. I have answered his letter and told him so.†

In a few days I shall write you fully, by a safe conveyance, relative to that business, as I have some hopes given me here that *court of France* will do the most material part that we want. In the meantime I leave it with your prudence to determine on the propriety of letting 164 [Vergennes?] know that the Empress has taken a decided part with England against America. You will hear more particularly from W. Lee when the opportunity is proper; in the meantime he is not idle,

\* Le Maire, commissioned by the State of Virginia to purchase some war supplies in Europe.

† "Poor Lemaire was sent about Germany to find goods and credit, which consumed a great deal of time to little purpose. Several of the manufacturers wrote to me that they would furnish him on my promise of payment. I referred them to Mr. Lee." *Franklin to Patrick Henry*, 26 February, 1779. See *William Lee to Governor Jefferson*, 24 September, 1779, *post*.

and has other prospects in view, the issue of which time must decide. You will address for him, always as before, to F—t, which is found to be the most proper, and oftentimes most expeditious. If no steps have yet been taken with *French court* relative to Le M[aire]'s business, 'twill be best to wait till I write by the conveyance mentioned above.

We see they are in a wonderful bustle in England—for what reason I don't know, tho' I conjecture, the scheme has been judicious to occasion it.

Lord Shelburne's coming in will occasion a continuance, certainly, of the war against America; experience will prove the wisdom of taking the thorn out of the feet of others, and putting it in his own. Here there is no war yet, and in my opinion there will be none, tho' probably the bustle may not subside, and things be quite settled for some time; however the general cry is strongly war, and the public movements tend that way.

The Austrian troops are almost all drawn from Moravia to the borders of Bohemia, where the Emperor is, and the report is, that orders are given for raising 80,000 recruits, which make an addition of 50,000 to what was before mentioned; but this last report I don't credit. What a fine expedition Thompson and Hynson have made—indeed little better could be expected from them, when the manner of their first setting out is well considered.

Such conduct should have been severely reprimanded in the beginning, instead of being applauded; for if the strictest regimen is not observed with such people, great inconvenience and mischief will inevitably follow.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

[VIENNA], 24 June [1778].

I hope my several letters from hence will reach you safely. His excellency the Baron de Breteuil having kindly promised to mention the arms, etc., that are wanted by the State of Virginia to Count Vergennes, I hope he will assist us in the business, for which reason it will be well for you to wait on him as soon as you receive this, which goes by the ambassador's courier. I have given the ambassador a list of the articles wanted, which he will probably enclose, or send a copy of to Count Vergennes. If the ministry should determine to let us have the articles out of the public stores, still one or two hundred thousand livres will be wanted to pay incidental charges of Insurance, and to make advances in part of freight to the vessels that must be ch[artered] to transport the goods. But as it will be an [ ] task to charter vessels, they must be taken where they [are] found, in France, Holland, Denmark, or Sweden; [and] small vessels, so as to divide the

risk and make [the con] veyance more sure, because small vessels ca[n go] into several little creeks on the coast, where [large] vessels cannot enter. I should prefer Danmark for the ch[arter] of vessels for this business, because if taken, it m[ay at] least have the effect of inclining that Power, partly from resentment against England, to join France, and as this will be a naval war principally between F[rance] and G[reat] B[ritain], it seems to me that Sweden and Danmark will be much more useful allies, than either Austria or Prussia; because the two former have not only ships of war, but a great number of excellent sailors; while the two latter Powers have neither ships nor sailors.

On these considerations, as well also, as that with money, the articles may be bo't and shipped, with infinitely more secresy and safety, than if taken from out of the King's stores. I would prefer your requesting the Count Vergennes to lend on account of the State of Virginia, one million of livres, which it is computed will be the least that the goods and charges necessarily to be paid with money will come to; this sum to be repaid by the State as soon as ever their trade is sufficiently open to allow them to export their commodities. The money in fact will not be wanted these six months, because, after a credit is fixed for the sum with a banker in Paris, it will take at least two months to prepare the goods and vessels to ship them in; and I have no

doubt, but that they may be bo't with bills at four months, which together will make six months before there will be occasion for the money to be actually paid.

If the ministry are disposed to assist the State in this business, [but] should not approve of lending the money, but rather choose to furnish the articles in their kind, we must request that they will order them to be supplied out of the arsenals in, or nearest to the ports where vessels may be found to charter. The importance of this supply to the general cause you know as well as me, and can state at large to Count Vergennes, who may possibly think that the application ought to be made to him by the Commissioners of Congress. But he should be informed that it is a particular commission in which neither Congress or their Commissioners have any immediate concern, tho' it is, notwithstanding, of most material consequence to the general welfare; because by the Constitution, every particular state is bound to furnish the soldiers they supply for the Continental army, with arms, &c., besides what are necessary for the troops that each [State] must keep on foot to protect and defend their own country. The [necessi]ty of this supply is now become greater since Nicho[ls]on was taken, and I hope on this occasion the French Cabinet will [recall] a maxim of the Great Sully—when speaking of the [French] affairs, that were then,

something as ours are now, he [said it] is a maxim that he who gives plentifully at once, gives [something] to which he will add; that he who gives by halves gives nothing.

If you should have applied already to Count Vergennes in consequence of what I before wrote, still I think it by all means advisable that you should do so again, because it is probable that the ambassador's representation may have its due weight. The sooner you advise me of the issue of this business the better, for if the funds can be obtained, there is no time to be lost, that the vessels may be despatched in good season.

There is no alteration in our affairs at this court since I wrote last, but these uninformed politicians begin to look wise. For I am told on hearing the fate of the Conciliatory Bills in America, they have not yet got out of their dream about the invincible power and inexhaustible resources of G[reat] B[ritis-  
ain]. I have, indeed, met with two or three pretty deep political [ ], but believe me they are not of German heads; for as far as I have seen, there is more in the K[ing of] Prussia's head, than in all the other Germans put together. \* \* \*

TO THE REV. JAMES MADISON.

V[IENNA], 24 June, [1778].

\* \* \* The heaviest and most dreadful [ ]

of the contest is, thank God, now over. The Independence of the 13 United States is fixed, and in my opinion will be acknowledged by all Europe, even by G. B., before the end of 1779. Let us then look a little forward for a moment to the period of peace, and in time provide the most essential means for the happiness and prosperity of our country. For this great end, I know not of any method more essential than taking care of the education of our youth, for tho' in old countries, perhaps, 'tis the laws and constitution that form the morals, manners and genius of the people; in new nations, as ours now are, this system must be reversed, and the morals, manners and genius of the first and second ages will have to establish laws and customs that must influence the well being of many generations to come. On this view it gives me much comfort to observe from whence you date your letter. From your abilities and good dispositions, our country may expect a plentiful crop of PATRIOT SONS to supply the void that has been made by a destructive war. The seminary, as far as I am acquainted with it, is well calculated for instruction; the rest must ever depend on the professors, and as far your department extends, I rely on every benefit to the community.

The turn that things have taken in Europe within the last six or seven months has given G. B. something else to contemplate on than the

conquest of America. Tho' no war is declared, they are at this moment in the most alarming confusion from the apprehension of a French invasion. The reinforcements sent to America this year do not exceed 2000 men, many of which can't be arrived at this time, and the whole destined for Canada, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, to secure, if possible, the remnant of the British Empire in N. A. from the power of the United States; so that if G. Washington has his army tolerably compleat, Phila. and New York must be evacuated, as Boston was, by the B. troops, or they must be taken Prisoners.

Every moment we expect a most dreadful war in this country between the Emperor and King of Prussia, which, if once commenced, will be bloody indeed. They have each armies, well appointed, of above 200,000 men, and have been for some months in the neighborhood of each other, on the confines of Bohemia and Silesia. France and G. B. are also on the point of measuring swords, or rather trying their naval forces; one with a strong fleet of 21 large ships at Portsmouth, and 12 or 14 at Plymouth ready for action; and the other with 30 odd large ships at Brest, ready for sea at a moment's warning, and much better provided than the English, besides several more ships at the different ports, above 60,000 troops commanded by their ablest general, Mareschal Broglio,

on the coast opposite England. The English militia, with the few regulars they have, altogether to the amount of about 35 or 40,000 men, are on the different parts of the English coasts. So that the eyes of all Europe are gazing to see where the mighty storm will burst. \* \* \*

Poor Mr. Norton now sleeps with his fathers. Young man [ ] of a consumption in great distress, and young John Lewis ended his [ ] in France, and James Wormeley is in the British army, and I believe [ ].

TO EDMUND JENINGS.

V[IEENNA], 24 June, [1778].

Many thanks for yours of the 9th, received yesterday, and for the intelligence it contained. While the cabinet continues as it has been and is, the Tory Quaker will always have intelligence quicker than those who ought to be first informed of what relates to *America*. I have reason to think the *British Court* have *a copy of i.* You may conjecture as well as me thro' what channel. I wonder you did not know of Nicholson's being taken, which we had here from London two days ago. You will no doubt believe that Posterity will not be puzzled to decide between S<sup>r</sup> W. T. and *W. Lee*, when you know that he intends to leave this place in about eight days. His return here will

depend upon circumstances, on which it is not in his power to decide. The conduct of the *Emperor's Court* has not been the most pleasing, and as appears to me infinitely more insulting to *France* than *America*, because the thick heads look on the business as a matter entirely between *England* and *France*, leaving the other totally out of the question. Some of distinction, however, are warm for the part of America, and in the beginning spoke freely to the great mortification of 50-2;\* but since the *Emperor* and *King* have taken their high line, mouths are in some measure shut. Tis possible that 47 [Russia?] may alter things, but whether he does or not, 'tis some comfort that the first object of *Congress* will be accomplished as well as the nature of things will admit, without being under any obligation to either the *Emperor*, *King*, or 47. [Russia?] \* \* \*

We have no war here yet ; but some that pretend to be in the secret say in about a fortnight it will be [ ] for Peace or War, tho' between ourselves I don't think that any of them know any more about the matter than you.

From what has appeared of the proceedings in [America] I am inclined to think the operations of this year will [be very ex]pensive and nothing decisive; for I am very clear the [mili]tia, at least

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\* British ambassador?

in any material numbers will not join [ ] W[ashington]. Certainly F[rance] will soon begin to make reprisals on B[ritish] merchantmen, otherwise she will be presently in the same situation she was at the declaration of last war, with one-fourth of her seamen prisoners. \* \* \*

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TO JOHN PAGE.

VIENNA, 24 June, [1778].

The letter you did me the Honor of writing the 12 March has reached me here. I have been some months in this country on the public service, and may possibly continue some months longer, after which, in all likelihood, I shall return to France, and pursue my old occupation in serving my friends. I am happy to find you had in prospect to finish the war this campaign, before you could possibly know the turn our affairs had taken in Europe, which I trust will not have the effect of making you less vigorous in your measures. Were you not so fully masters of your own business, and so fully sensible of the weakness, wickedness and treachery of the British ministers, as you really are, it would be still unnecessary to caution you against them, because every step they take leaves a visible mark of the cloven foot. Congress have wisely determined that an explicit acknowledgement of your Independence, and withdrawing the

British fleets and armies from the territories of the United States, must be the preliminary articles to any kind of treaty.

If these ministers were not perfect Idiots, how could they expect any good from sending out as a commissioner, a Scotchman, who is well known to be the devoted tool of Lords Bute and Mansfield, and that they have kept him as a spy among the opposition for many years, to be masters of their secrets.\* If the British army at Philadelphia is bro't to share the same fate this campaign, that Burgoyne's army did the last, this may be the [last] of the war; but if that is not the case, you should look forward to another. For I trust there is not a man in America who does not feel the justness of the great Prince of Parma's observation, that when the sword is drawn in certain [ ], one should never forget to throw away the scabbard; and [while] we have every reason to be content with our new allies, the French, yet it is always more secure to take care of ourselves, than to trust to our friends for protection.

But if in the din of war, one moment can be spared to look forward to time of peace, let me request your attention to the mode of levying taxes for supporting the heavy expences of this war, and to the college for the education of our youth. The

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\* Gov. Geo. Johnstone.

immense importance of both these objects to the future prosperity and happiness of our country, is so obvious, that it is unnecessary for me to press it on you; therefore will only mention that, after having well considered the various subjects of taxation that our country is capable of, except a few articles of luxury at present of no great importance, a poll tax seems to me the best, as being easiest collected, with the least expence, and as equal, if not more so, than any other. A tax on lands must be always very unequal, and taxes on articles of commerce, either export or import, generally take a pound from the community for every shilling they bring into the public coffer.

For months past we have every moment been expecting the commencement of a most tremendous war between the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Germany, and between France and England. Still there is no declaration on either side yet. The English men-of-war and privateers in most parts of the world, even on the coasts of France, continue to take the French merchant vessels, which we cannot, in common sense, suppose France will suffer much longer without making reprisals, especially as she has now a powerful fleet ready, and is better prepared for war, than she has been any time in this century. They never were more alarmed in England than they are at this time, every moment expecting an invasion from

France, which gives so much employment that they have little time to think of conquering America. \* \* \*

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TO MR. ELLIS.\*

VIENNA, 24 June, 1778.

I am glad to hear that my estate under your management is bro't into some order, and I hope in a little time you will be able to make me amends for not having received anything from it for three years past. It is not in my power at this distance to be very particular, but in general I wish you to get as much of the swampy lands as possible made into timothy meadow, and instead of selling any hay or fodder, I think they will be more beneficially employed in increasing and supporting well a large stock of cattle and sheep to manure your lands, and the rams should always be kept from the Ewes till the fall, so that no lambs may be dropped till the middle or latter end of April. I wish to have a large quantity of white mulberry trees raised; they should be planted by the sides of the fences round all the fields. Take care of the fruit trees and gardens, and put some promising young lads apprentices to all the useful trades, such as carpenters, house joiners, wheelwrights, sawyers, blacksmiths, brick layers, and ship carpenters. The

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\* Manager at Green Spring.

tobacco that is made at present may as well be sold in the country, and what money is raised from the estate may be put into the public loan office till there is an opportunity of sending me some remittances. I can't too much recommend to you (tho' I hope there is no occasion for it,) to take all possible care of the people. The women with child should never be hard worked or oppressed in any manner, and the children should always be plentifully fed and have necessary clothing. I wish them all to be treated as human beings whom Heaven has placed under my care not only to minister to my luxury, but to contribute to their happiness. In return for which I have a right to expect their faithful, honest and diligent service. I shall be glad to hear from you. The Rev. Mr. Madison at William and Mary College will tell you how to direct to me, and I dare say will take the trouble to forward your letters. I wish you health, &c.

## TO ARTHUR LEE.

V[ENNA], 27 June, [1778].

\* \* \* I only mean now to beg you will suspend making any contract or engagement with P[ene]t & Co. I am satisfied the business will not be properly done by them. I presume it is with P[ene]t himself that the negotiation is going on, but whether 'tis or no, I can't think in any manner

that it will be right. I have many invincible reasons too long to recite now.

You have above some parts of the bargain proposed at S[trasburg] to Captain Le M[aire], which exclusive of the prices, show that nothing can be done there. Indeed at first sight, a place so remote from any sea port, must appear improper, not only on account of the charge of transport, but the length of time to get to a port, which will be much longer than the voyage. I trust the whole of the first order will be furnished by the *Court of France* —if not, we must essay other methods. I know not the orders given at Ch[aillo]t to Capt. Le M., therefore shall only say to him in general, that I do not think we can do any thing at S. He will then of course, pursue his orders . . .

#### MEMORANDUM.\*

Although the Emperor of G., when crown'd, takes an oath, that he will, as much as possible, prevent emigrations, yet all the Princes and sovereign powers, claim the privilege of making treaties with, and selling their subjects to any foreign powers, provided such engagements are not contrary to the peace, liberty and interests of the Germanic body. This privilege has been fixed and ascertained by the treaty of Westphalia in 1648,

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\* From William Lee's letter book.

which is guaranteed by France, Sweden, Denmark, &c., &c. France, in consequence of this treaty, as well as other neighboring powers, have ever since been in the exercise of hiring German troops from the several powers; and at the death of the late Elector of Bavaria,\* in December, 1777, actually had a treaty with him for that purpose. This prior to [ ] extremely anxious of maintaining [ ] it cannot be expected of her, to move in the design of obtaining a resolution of the General Diet against emigrations, unless it is on the principle, that being sent over the sea, they must be forever lost to their country, and in case of danger to the Germanic body, their distance will certainly prevent their being returned in due time.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT, 16 July, [1778].

*My dear Brother :*

I wrote you the 14<sup>th</sup> in answer to one received that day without any date, and yesterday I received yours of the 9<sup>th</sup> covering one from R. H. L. Please to forward the rest that came with it, by the first post, and I beg you will remember that if you ever forward to me a letter without the original cover, that you will preserve the cover for me, marking on it when the letter it inclosed was received, from

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\* Maximilian Joseph, son of Charles Albert.

whom, the place and date, when it was forwarded to me and by what conveyance. This particularity I know will appear trifling to you, but I have my own private reasons for desiring it to be done. You remember that on Mr. S[imeon] Deane's return, many other letters were written and delivered to him. You must remember also some particularities that happened at that time. R. H. L. acknowledges receiving by him my letter in December, but not that in February. This business should be fully investigated. I wrote by Mr. S[imeon] Deane to R. H. Lee dated February 28, 1778, covering copyss of mine from Nantes of the 13 and 15 of February. Also to F. L. Lee, Robert Morris, the Secret Committee and President of Congress, all of date February 27. These I think were put under cover addressed to the P—t of C—ss. I likewise wrote to Genl. Arnold and sent him an engraving. You have Mr. D's receipt for these letters, a copy of which you ought to send R. H. L. immediately, and inform him of the above particulars.

Pray send me the explanation about your present manner of using the red book, for I do not understand how you have fixed it with R. H. L. Let me know if there is any opportunity to America. *W. Lee* says he would by all means avoid any kind of *difference with Adams*, or even a *coollness*. Let the appointment go as it will, *A. Lee* should not meddle at all, which will embarrass

*Franklin* more than any other conduct; but it will be certainly right in you to inform the present Deputies, where the power is now lodged that they may pursue such measures with respect to themselves as they think proper. The Baron De Breteuil has interested himself in favor of a Mr. Comyn at Marseilles, to be appointed in that port. He has written to Mr. Grand to apply to the Commissioners for him, and I must request you will do Mr. Comyn all the service you can, in return for the obligations we are under to the Baron de Breteuil, who has given all countenance to our affairs. He is esteem'd a sage and deep politician, and I think bids fair to be one day at the head of affairs in his own country.

With respect to the business of Virginia, I have so often desired that no contract or engagement for goods may be enter'd into with Messrs. Pliarne, Penet, D'Acosta & Co. on account of the State, that I have only to confirm now what I have before written on that subject. So far as we can get funds to be sure of the payment, I can buy the goods, particularly the fusils, at least 20 per cent. cheaper than they supply them at. This is paying too extravagantly for their credit, besides which they will expect the returns to be consigned to them, the profits whereof, you may in some measure conjecture. I must request you will explicitly and fully inform me of what measures you have

taken and are about to take in this business, for it is impossible to judge from hints or general expressions, how to conduct myself.

I have nothing else at this time to attend to, but laying in these goods, for our general affairs here must stand still as they are now, 'till the close of this campaign, which letters from Saxony and Vienna say was commenced the 5th of this month, by the King of P. entering into Bohemia. Saxony gives a considerable advantage to the Prussians, and Vienna of course to the Austrians. The real truth I cannot as yet find out; but this seems certain, that the war is began. All I want of you is to negotiate the loan, on which subject I wrote you you fully from Ratisbonne, but I am convinced and can prove it that we had better give 8 or even ten p<sup>r</sup> c<sup>t</sup> interest for the money, than enter into the contract proposed to get the goods on credit.

If you can contrive safely a line to E. J[enin]gs in London, pray tell him I have wrote 2 or 3 letters since I went to V[ienn]a, and not receiving any answer, I fear they have been intercepted in England; but if 'tis so, he need not be under any apprehensions on that account. With respect to Franklin, W. Lee desires Arthur Lee to remember what Homer says of Nauplius, King of Eubœa, who being irritated against the Greecian chiefs, for having condemned to death unjustly his son Palamedes, thro' the *artifices* of Ulysses, placed false fires on

Mount Capharea to lead the Greecian fleet to their destruction against the rocks; but the cunning Ulysses, conscious of what he deserved from Nauplius, went another course, and escaped the destruction intended for him. We are all well, and send our best love. Adieu. Yours sincerely and truly.

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TO EDMUND JENINGS.

F[RANKFOR]T, 19 July, [1778].

\* \* \* The English papers tell us that the [ ] to acknowledge the independence of America and make peace. 'Tis certain they now have the fairest opportunity that they can wish for, to make such a [ ] relished by almost the whole nation, by means of Gen'l Howe, [if they] do not wait too long, but assemble the Parliament immediately to give them full powers and authority. I will then proceed to give you what I think they ought to do in order to succeed. By all means avoid a war with F[rance]; restore the two frigates and other captures, which may be done with honor, as they have certainly been taken contrary to ye laws of nations, and 'tis always more consistent with the dignity of a great nation to repair the errors of her servants, than obstinately to persist in supporting them. Withdraw all the B[ritis]h troops and ships to Halifax at least, if not to G. B. Acknowledge the independence of the 13 United

States, fix their boundaries as contended for by G. B. against F. in 1754. Each party to have free liberty of fishing on the Banks of Newfoundland. G. B. to pay for towns burnt and private property destroyed on land by her troops during the war; a mutual right of citizenship in all respects, to the subjects of each party in either country, and a free right of entry and commerce of the ships and merchandize of either party into the ports or territories of the other. British and American property that has been or may be confiscated in America, to be made good, and a general act of oblivion passed on both sides. I do not think any propositions less than these will answer, nor will these be accepted unless they are made neatly, plainly and fully at once, and by some person like yourself, whose honor, integrity and justice cannot doubt; for you may be assured there is a party in America and in Congress, tho' not the majority at present, [ ] or fully sensible of their strength, wish not for [ ] G. B. has any share of the Newfoundland fishery, or is in possession of C., N. S., and B., or the Floridas. This party has much address in negotiation, and will prevail in their schemes unless the B. M. adopt the open, candid and plain part above mentioned. Mr. Fitzh[ug]h may assert what he pleases, but he must excuse me for not giving the least credit to what he advanced. I am convinced that America will treat as readily at least, with the

present ministry as the opposition, if they will but go plainly to work, and by such men, [of] whose honor and honesty the Americans have an opinion. I am sure that not one of the three commissioners\* last sent out will be trusted by a single man in Congress. With these sentiments of the agents, you may easily judge what will be the issue of their negotiation.

## TO ARTHUR LEE.

F—T, 30 July, [1778].

*My dear Brother:*

I received here yours of the 21st June, sent to N—, and yesterday another of no date, with several accompaniments, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. You seem to have adopted Mr. Burke's principle, that the representative when once appointed is no longer amenable to the controul of his constituent. You will remember that the contract with P[enet] & Co., was from the beginning objected to, and with the power a positive injunction against it was sent, both which were received before the contract was finish'd. However, as that and the one at Klingenthal are compleated, I shall decline farther observations. I wish to have as soon as possible, full copys of the last Invoice, power to borrow the money, and the letter accompanying them. At

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\*The Earl of Carlisle, William Eden, and George Johnstone.

the same time say if with respect to the loan you have applyed to *French court*, G[ra]nd, the F[armers] G[eneral] and M—de, or to any of them. From this answer a judgment may be formed whether a trip to P[aris] is likely to produce any good effect. I am convinced that *Deane* and the tribe have corrupted *Franklin*.

I wish to know also, whether any thing about the State business is known at *Passy*. Tell our friend at Radswil, before he complains of want of intelligence, he should answer my last letter from V[ienna]. The bringing an English Frigate into Brest, taking most of the Guernsey and Jersey privateers, the order for the Brest fleet to sail, the arrival of the Spanish flota, and lastly, the order for reprisal on the British Marine dated the 10th inst., which I only heard of two daies ago, are surely too trifling objects of intelligence to be mentioned from your quarter. I expect it will be the same when news is received at P. of the arrival and operations of D'Estaing's squadron and Byron's 3 sixty-four-gun ships; and 3 or 4 frigates despatched immediately will be exactly in time to secure all the Newfoundland Fishery, which would be almost as heavy a blow as destroying Keppel's fleet. If you think so, you know where to mention it, but no time is to be lost. I hope you have particularly mentioned my letters sent by D[eane] that have not been delivered. You see by the

Committee's letter that my two to Congress in February have not been received. I think if you have been precise this matter may be fixed, which will explain, tho' not legally prove the stealer of the other letters.

The northern post last Monday the 27th, bro't advice that a truce for 6 weeks between the Emperor and King of Prussia had taken place; that commissioners on each side were appointed to meet at Glatz to settle the peace; that in consequence the King had retir'd from Bohemia into Silesia and Prince Henry had also retired from B—a to Saxony. This news is denyed here by the Austrian party, but to-day's post will confirm or contradict. If I hear anything in time you shall know it at bottom. The whole is not very likely, tho' it is probable the armies have retir'd from Bohemia for want of provisions, as the Austrians themselves have laid waste the countries and the inhabitants have some time retired by command of the Emperor to the interior parts. Probably too, the King, grown old, is not so venturesome as formerly, and does not choose lightly to risk his great reputation so dearly earned, therefore he has not attacked the Austrian lines.

Kniphausen and many other officers from N. Y. are arrived in England. The dragoons and guards are on their way back. Lord North keeps in, and I believe will to the end of the chapter. What a

wretched lot the whole opposition is? Can they expect to be ever in any degree respectable, while they continue to receive with open arms every scoundrel that the ministry choose to discard, such as Bur[goy]ne. I presume the commissioners will inform Congress of the conduct of 142 [Ross?]. I would not wish you to be hasty in mentioning Mr. Comyn, least it may be a reason for another to object. Nor do I understand that you have authority to appoint any consuls, but only mercantile agents, which appointment for the present might satisfy Mr. C. All here are as usual, except the little Rose Bud, who has suffer'd and is now suffering as much with the chicken pox as she could with the small pox.

I hope you will in one instance prove like the priests—practice differently from what you preach; that farther you will pay due attention to my several complaints and let me have the earliest intelligence of every material occurrence. I do not press for secrets, but only that I may not be expos'd to ridicule in asking others and learning from public Gazettes, what I ought to be informed of first . . . Adieu.

TO M. NEUFVILLE.\*

F[RANKFORT], 27 August, [1778].

\* \* \* In 6 or 7 days I shall set out for Paris, where my stay will not be above three weeks, or to the latter end of September at furthest. On my return here I could contrive to meet you at some place on the road, or by going somewhat out of my way, provided you are assured by Mons. le P.† that our meeting will be of any essential service in accomplishing the business we have been agitating. On this you can give me your opinion in ten days or a fortnight by a line addressed to myself, and put under care to Mons. Grand, Banquier in Paris, writing on my letter that it is not to be delivered into any hands but my own, when I can in answer fix the time and place of our meeting. You may be

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\* Jean de Neufville was then at Aix la Chapelle, and writing to Lee before the latter's departure for Paris, arranged for a meeting at Aix. Lee left Frankfort on the evening of the 31st, and the meeting seems to have occurred.

It is uncertain what incident first led Lee to propose a treaty. Some letters from England for him had been sent through the Pensionary in March or April of this year, and in April Franklin had sent to the Pensionary a copy of the treaty entered into by France. How Neufville, who figured a year later in a remarkable proposition to Franklin (*Works*, vi, 334), became connected with the negotiation, I have not been able to discover. From the beginning, Lee appears to have acted upon his own responsibility, without consulting any one but his brothers and Izard.

† The Pensionary.

assured of the good disposition of my principals, towards the good people and States of Holland, and if the same inclinations prevail in your quarter, I do not fear concluding something that will be equally satisfactory to both parties. It will be advisable for you if we meet, to bring with you a letter from Mr. the P., to lay the foundation of our future proceedings. I hope you will not find any difficulty in the business of the loan, which will be the best corner-stone to lay for the foundation of the building we propose to raise, and if you find it can be accomplished, the sooner we come to the terms the better. \* \* \*

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TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

PARIS, September 12th, 1778.

*Gentlemen:*

I have just arrived here from Germany, and finding the bearer of this about to set off in a few hours, I cannot omit saying a word or two, though it will be impossible to be so full as I could wish. I wrote to the President of Congress from Vienna, the 30th of May last, which was forwarded from hence, to which be pleased to refer; since then I have received your first and only letter, dated from Yorktown the 14th of May last, wherein you acknowledge the receipt of mine of the 24th of November and the 18th of December; but I am

surprised at your not receiving also two other letters from me, dated the 28th of February and 23d of March last, which were sent by Mr. Simeon Deane, and addressed to the President of Congress.

Since my last of the 30th of May, when the war broke out between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, on consultation with the French Ambassador at Vienna, it was agreed to be most advisable for me to retire to Frankfort, and wait there until the several Powers in Germany and the rest of Europe had taken a decided line in this war, when we might be able to direct our operations to the most advantage for America, since it was evident that neither the Court of Vienna nor that of Berlin could, in their critical situation; take an open part with us, for fear of throwing Hanover, with a body of thirty thousand men, into the scale of the adversary, especially, too, as France had declared a neutrality, on the urgent application of the House of Austria for aid, under the treaties subsisting between them and France ; to which, however, France replies with truth, that the case does not exist as specified in the treaty, which obliges them to aid the House of Austria. The two mighty Powers have been in the field opposed to each other ever since the beginning of July, when the King of Prussia entered Bohemia with his army; but no battle has yet been given, or anything material passed on either side. There have

been perpetual skirmishes between the foraging parties and advanced posts, which on the whole seem rather in favor of the Prussians. In the course of the winter or spring, we hope things will take such a turn as to enable me to operate to advantage with one or the other of the parties ; but at present I think you may be assured that such measures have been taken as will effectually prevent our enemies from obtaining any further aid from any part of Europe, if they should continue the war against us another year, which I can hardly expect they will do, for I am informed, and have reason to believe my information true, that orders have been already sent to their Commissioners in America to acknowledge our independence, if nothing else will answer, in order to commence a treaty and make a peace.

After my arrival at Frankfort, finding an opportunity offered to me of negotiating a treaty of commerce with the United States of Holland and West Friesland, I embraced it, and have proceeded so far as to agree on the draught of a treaty, with the regular representative of the Pensionary and Burgomasters of the city of Amsterdam, of which I have not time to send you a copy by this conveyance, but I am sure you would approve of it, as it contains all the substantially advantageous articles of the commercial treaty with France, and some beneficial and agreeable additions:

So far, the business has been conducted on both sides with great secrecy, which is absolutely necessary in order to procure final success with the united States here; for though the city of Amsterdam and the States of Holland pay, it is supposed, about five-sixths of the whole taxes for the support of the Government, which consequently gives them very powerful weight and influence, yet they have no power, by their constitution, of entering into such a treaty, without the concurrence of the other united States, in some of which the Prince of Orange has an over-due influence, and all the world know his blood connexions with the King of England, as well as that he has the same designs against his country that have been attempted to be carried into execution against us, and which he hopes to succeed in by the aid of his cousin of England, with whom he is in the strictest intimacy. This renders secrecy of the last importance, until the patriots in Holland have secured success, before the business is agitated in the General Assembly of the States, where it must come, to have full authority.

Here I find myself embarrassed because I have no power to sign such a treaty, and I know not how to determine as yet about communicating it, in the present situation of things, to those who have a power to sign it in your name, because it is well known that some of the most important negotia-

tions and proceedings here, relative to your affairs, have some time past been very speedily communicated in England, and I have not yet been able to learn that the old channel is stopped. I shall, however, proceed in the manner that shall, on the maturest reflection, appear the best to forward the wishes of Congress, and advance the prosperity of our country.

In a week or ten days I shall return to my station in Germany,\* and watch with careful attention over my charge there, and when any thing material occurs you shall be duly advised.

I have the honor to be, &c.

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TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

PARIS, 12 September, 1778.

*My dear Brother:*

I am just arrived here from Germany and find the bearer, M<sup>r</sup> Gilby, just setting out with dispatches for Congress, and have only a few minutes to write to you.

I wrote you from Vienna 30<sup>th</sup> May, and have since received Loudoun's of May 16<sup>th</sup> last, for which thank him, and give our love, as I can't write now having no time. I have received from you 25<sup>th</sup> Jan. last from Green Spring, and 13<sup>th</sup> May

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\* "In eight days at farthest I shall return to my old station at Frankfort." *William Lee to E. Browne, 15 September, 1778.*

from York town; in the last you mention receiving by M<sup>r</sup> Simeon Deane and Cap<sup>t</sup> Young mine of Nov: 24 and 30, and 3, 6, and 18 Dec<sup>r</sup>; but you say nothing of one dated 28<sup>th</sup> Feb:, covering copies of what I wrote you from Nantes, about a fortnight before; which was enclosed to the President of Congress, with one to Congress, another to the Secret Committee, and another to F. L. Lee Esq<sup>r</sup>, all of the same date with your's, and this packet delivered to M<sup>r</sup> Simeon Deane, for which he gave a receipt, but I do not yet learn that any of them have been delivered.

M<sup>r</sup> Silas Deane went from hence as far as Versailles with his brother Simeon, when he set out with the dispatches the beginning of March, and they staid there together all night. I hope you will inquire about these letters, and if they have not been received, that the transaction may be sifted to the bottom.

There was a letter from me also to M<sup>r</sup> Rob<sup>t</sup> Morris in the same packet, and of the same date, viz: 28 Feb: 1778.

You will see by my letter to Congress of this date how far I have gone in negotiating a treaty of Commerce with their High Mightinesses, the United States of Holland, etc; but it is really a lamentable circumstance that I forsee the business will be obstructed, and I am afraid fatally because I have not power to sign it, and if communicated here,

where the only power of signing is at present vested, it is most probable, that intelligence of it will speedily get to England; as has for a long time been the case with all the most important and critical transactions relative to America.

This channel which was fixed long before M<sup>r</sup> Adams came, I am afraid is not yet obstructed. I think you must have reason to fix at least on some of the agents, and tho' the great patrons and protectors are removed, yet one at least of the instruments remains, and is enabled as much as ever to carry on the old game.

I see a thousand difficulties on every side, but my whole object will be to accomplish the wishes of Congress, and effectually serve my country.

I know perfectly those that are on the watch to catch, at every step that they can torture, to serve their *selfish* purposes, but I know too, that when a man exceeds his authority, success will varnish over every irregularity, and sometimes blots out the remembrance of the most horrid iniquities—when a failure draws along with it, not only censure for the simple act, but a load of reproach, which is often unmerited.

'Tis most certain that if this negotiation is known in England, or even to the Prince of Orange's party in Holland, before its success is secured, that it will be effectually prevented.

I must return to Germany in about 10 daies, to

watch over my charge there, which for the present is at a stand, as you will see by mine to Congress; and yet it will be some time before any one can possibly judge what turn affairs will take in that quarter; it seems to me most probable that the war will continue some years, and that peace will not arrive until many bloody and terrible battles are fought; however you may be assured that Great Britain will not get any more aid from Europe to prosecute her ridiculous war with America, which in fact I look upon as good as ended. However after 'tis finished Congress will nearly have an Augean stable to cleanse in correcting the disorders that must have crept in, and in punishing the corruptions and peculations that no doubt have been practised. \* \* I have sent from Holland 2,000 Dutch blankets and 3,000 p<sup>r</sup> woolen stockings, on acc<sup>t</sup> of the Secret Committee.

My best love and wishes attend you always.  
Adieu.

COMMISSIONERS TO WILLIAM LEE.

PASSY, September 26th, 1778.

*Sir:*

We have considered with some attention, the papers which you have laid before us, containing a project of a treaty to be made between the Republic of the United Provinces and that of the United States of America.

As Congress have entrusted to us the authority of

treating with all the States of Europe, excepting such as have a particular commission designed by Congress to treat with them; and as no particular Commissioner has been appointed to treat with their High Mightinesses, we have already taken such measures as appeared to us suitable to accomplish so desirable a purpose, as a friendship between nations so circumstanced as to have it in their power to be extremely beneficial to each other in promoting their mutual prosperity. And we propose to continue our endeavors in every way consistent with the honor and interest of both.

But we do not think it prudent, for many reasons, to express, at present, any decided opinion concerning the project of a treaty which you have done us the honor to communicate to us.

We cannot, however, conclude without expressing our real disposition to treat upon an object, which, besides laying the foundation of an extensive commerce between the two countries, would have a very forcible tendency to stop the effusion of human blood, and prevent the further progress of the flames of war.

We have the honor to be, with the utmost respect,  
sir, your most obedient humble servants,

B. FRANKLIN,  
ARTHUR LEE,  
JOHN ADAMS.

TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT, 8 Oct<sup>r</sup> 1778.*Dear brother:*

I wrote to you the 4th and yesterday I received yours of the 1st. I forgot to mention that directions were given to M<sup>r</sup> Sauvage, orfèvre à l'aineau blanc, quai des orfèvres, pont neuf, to make his estimate for a small portable vice; as well as the Seal for the State of Virginia; but on reflection I think the vice will be unnecessary, because they must have had something of this sort to use their former seal with; therefore all that is now wanted will be the two silver pieces properly engraved to make the proper impression on each side of the wax.

This can't cost near what you talked of, nor can it be difficult to execute. Let me know if you can have it done in Paris, if not I will have it done in Holland.

Design of a Great seal for a State. On one side of the seal the impression should be Virtue, the Genius of the state, dressed as an Amazon, resting on a spear with her left hand, and holding a drawn sword in her right hand, with Tyranny under her feet, a crown falling from his head, holding a broken chain in his left hand and a sceptre in his right hand.

In the exergue the word "Virginia" over the head of Virtue, and below the words

"Sic Semper Tyrannis."

On the opposite side of the seal should be Liberty holding a spear in her right hand, with a cap at the end of the spear. On one side of Liberty should be the goddess Ceres, with her horn of plenty in her left hand and an olive branch in her right hand. On the other side of Liberty should be Eternity with a globe in her left hand and a phoenix in her right.

In the exergue the words

*"Deus Nobis, Hæc otia Fecit."\**

TO S. THORPE.

F[RANKFORT], 14 October, [1778.]

\* \* \* The election of a new Mayor seems to show that instead of mending things are growing worse and worse, therefore I shall not be surprised if N—m, (whose political principles I think you had always a much better opinion of than they deserve,) should succeed the little petulant, silly, proud creole. Our enemies, I am informed, are in their hearts, well pleased at the resignation not being made, because it makes them more strong in the Court; at the same time, with their usual effrontery, they are on all occasions abusing me

\*Indorsed on the original design of the great seal, the following names.

Leonard, graveur à la monie on Au Galarie du Louvre.

Lorthiør, rue de la Monie.

Gammot, vis-a-vis Sainte Chapelle, Cour du Palais.

Sauvage, orfèvre, Quai des orfèvres.

personally. 'Tis not in my power to express the painful sensations I have experienced since we parted, on viewing at a distance the course of public affairs. For the downfall of poor old E[nglan]d seems to be decided in the registers above. The utter blindness, folly, madness, and distraction, that prevail thro' all orders and degrees, appear to be totally incurable. For private and particular reasons, I am much pleased that the inland trade last spring has been so brisk and profitable, but I fear it will prove in the body politic as in the human frame, that the cheeks glow, the spirits are most lively, and the blood circulates quicker than usual, when the poor creature is at death's door in the last stage of a consumption.  
\* \* \* Manufactures are declining in price, tho' the number of manufactures are greatly diminished by many circumstances, but particularly by the number of people in arms. A manufactory in one of the most curious and principal branches in which England excelled, is established in this country (viz. Germany), where I have been. There are now above 400 men employed. The principal and by far the greater part of the manufacturers are Englishmen. These are bad symptoms, but they might be cured, if there was any soundness in the body. The French prizes, tho' they benefit individuals, will most certainly injure the Community, because like the lotteries, every one will expect the

great prize, and on that presumption will neglect his fair trade, and live on his imaginary gain, till the Gazette awakes him from his reverie. With respect to America, her Independence is irrevocably fixed. The conduct of opposition has, with respect to that, been as foolish and inconsistent as on almost all other occasions; but the ministry know from repeated experience how little their feeble efforts can interrupt any measures they wish to carry into execution. Therefore any excuse on that head is really trifling with common sense. I should suppose that peace may be made, and a treaty of amity and commerce entered into with America, without saying one word about Independence. There is a great probability that before this reaches you, some intelligence will be received from thence, which will show the necessity of such a measure's being speedily adopted, even to the most blind and obstinate. \* \* \* All which she probably may preserve by a peace this winter. The East and West Indies, she holds only by the mercy of France and Spain. In this lamentable situation of things, you cannot blame my resolution fixing on this quiet and retired place for my winter quarters; but it has, and does give me pain, to reflect on my keeping that place which might be properly filled by another, and whilst it is impossible for me in the present circumstances to execute the duty thereof. When my constituents are

desirous of it, I shall at any moment be ready to put it in their power to choose another; for, in truth, I should have done this long ago, had I not apprehended that they were not provided with a successor that they approve of.

As to myself, I am no stranger to the many aspersions that have been cast upon me; but I bear them with patience, in confidence that those who really know me, will be satisfied my conduct has been entirely directed by the wish of giving as much satisfaction to my constituents, as my situation would admit of, without a single view to myself. I am not insensible of the favors they have done me, and shall be always happy in the opportunity of testifying my gratitude whenever I can do it with propriety. It is said "Interest on the one hand, and necessity on the other, may for a time unite France and America; but their union cannot be lasting—the resentment of the latter will in time subside, and they will again look to G. B. as the land of their forefathers." All this might prove very true, provided things are not carried too far. \* \* \* Old women and children, with the savage butchery now practicing by a refugee from Newgate, now ycleped Col. Butler, with the Indian allies and faithful auxiliaries of the B. M., on the babes and sucklings on the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania,\* will naturally produce very different

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\* The massacre at Wyoming had occured on the 3d of July.  
Col. John Butler being the British commander.

feelings from those of affection or esteem. It remains entirely with your ministers to decide (but this decision they will not long have in their power to make), whether or not America shall be forever firmly united, as well by affection, as by gratitude and interest, with France. Let them then look well to this, and before 'tis too late, or they may rue the consequences. . . . \*

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TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

FRANKFORT ON THE RIVER MAIN IN GERMANY, }  
15 October, 1778.

*My dear Brother:*

I wrote to you the 21<sup>st</sup> Ult<sup>o</sup> from Paris, when I sent to Congress a Copy of a Plan of a Treaty between the seven United Provinces of the Netherlands and the United States of America, which had been digested by me and an eminent Dutch Merchant of Amsterdam, who represented the Pensionary of that City. I sent also from Paris a duplicate copy of this plan to Congress, and a copy of my Letter to you. By this Conveyance I send a copy of this Plan, and have wrote pretty fully, to which be pleased [to refer]. How the Commissioners at Paris will proceed with this treaty, can't be positively said; but I conceive 'twill go, as I mention'd in my last, of which you have a copy. In your re-

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\* This letter is much mutilated.

plies to me, pray note the particular dates of such letters as you receive from me, as also whether they are originals or the 1<sup>st</sup> or the 2<sup>d</sup> copies.

You will receive with this a power of attorney relative to the Estate in Virginia and the necessary Letters. The determinations you take in this business and the conduct of it afterwards, you are very sensible, will be of such high and lasting importance to me and mine, that I am sure you will deliberate fully with our Dear Brother F. L. L. before you take any measures in it, or communicate the design to any person whatever; and if the resolution is to sell, I think no time shou'd unnecessarily be lost. All this your wisdom and judgement will direct properly, but I beg you will give me the earliest and repeated information of what you do determine on, and particularly relative to the plan or constitution of the Continental Loan Office. Besides by the Public expresses, which are generally the safest with regard to the Enemy, you may write by the way of Nantes, or to the care of Mr<sup>r</sup> John Bondfield, merchant in Bordeaux. I have before me y<sup>e</sup> following letters: 25 Jan., '78 from G. Spring; 13 May, '78 from York, and one Copy of it; and 6 June, 1777 which you sent by the Eastward and only came to hand last month. With respect to the first, the most material part is answer'd by by the power now sent. Ellis sent me his Accounts by which I perceive the number of Negroes are less

than when they were divided. Now the Courts are open, 'tis presumable that Fauntleroy may be made to account for what he has received from the Estate. 'Tis now upwards of 3 years since I received one shilling from the Estate, and the last remittance, in 1775, was about 15 hhds. of Tobacco and £40 or £50 Sterling. This consider'd, I can't suppose that it will be expected that I shou'd be able to send any supplies from Europe, until something is sent that will enable me to do so. Those who have claims on me for Ballances in consequence of former mercantile transactions, must be sensible that while such large ballances are detain'd from me in the Country, I cannot pay their bills here; therefore if they draw, their bills will be returned. Besides, if it was ever so much in my power, I can't see the justice or reason for my paying in Europe what I owe, and being obliged to receive in the Country (or not receive it at all) what is owing to me, at a loss of 5 or 600 per cent. On the principle then of equal justice, I hope my Brother F. L. L. will pay off all my creditors without distinction, in the same manner and with the same Currency that he receives from my Debtors.

The crop of tobacco made in 1777, I suppose, will be sold in the country, where I am informed the price has been 65s, 70s and upwards per hundred weight. The crop made in 1778, I would not have you in a hurry about disposing of it, because

'tis probable that, should the war continue another year, France will judge it advisable to afford convoys for the American trade and particularly to Virginia ; in which case my tob<sup>o</sup> may be sent to Europe always consign'd to myself or orders. I hear a good account of M<sup>r</sup> Ellis from various quarters, and if you determine on keeping the Estate, I shall hope he will continue ; but in that case, I wish the removal of the people backwards and forwards from one plantation to another may as much as possible be avoided; because it prevents me from clearly determining about their increase or decrease. I will order the few things M<sup>r</sup> Ellis desires to be sent by the first good opportunity from France, with some bark for yourself. The wines of that country are all very improper for your habit, subject to the gout. Besides the medicines sent by M<sup>r</sup> King, your son Thos. was order'd to send 2 lbs. of Bark by the Independence, Cap<sup>t</sup> Young, and the same quantity by another opportunity, all which I paid for. I am sure you know me well enough to be certain of my lasting gratitude for the care and attention you have bestow'd on me and my concerns, which I hope you will continue. Ludwell has grown much of late, is likely in his person, fond of reading and has a good genius, so that I think he will do very well, especially as he must early in life learn to provide for himself, which will force his natural talents into full exer-

cise in due season. He is still with his Uncle. Thom. is still with M<sup>r</sup> Schweighauser, and if I may judge from his Letters, he improves a good deal; and besides, I understand M<sup>r</sup> S. has begun to employ him in active business, which from his great caution and circumspection I think he would not do, unless Thom. was trustworthy. He shall continue where he is, until I can find some better plan for him. Indeed he is still but 20 years old and another year's apprenticeship will be perhaps requisite to give him a proper knowledge of business. I mention'd before (one of which letters by the way I have reason to apprehend has been intercepted and kept by M<sup>r</sup> D.) and I hope you will not forget it, that whenever the Idea is taken up of appointing consuls in France, I cou'd wish you would endeavor to get M<sup>r</sup> Edw. Browne my former Partner appointed Consul at L'Orient, if it is fix'd on for a free Port; if it is not, for Dunkirk or Holland. I know his worth intimately well and can answer for his principles. By all means prevent the power of nominating Consuls from being delegated to any Persons in Europe, for really at present a certain person, 169 *b* xxi in. \_\_\_\_\_ \* seems to think that Congress is bound to follow his Mandates, and that it is highly presumptuous to do anything without his orders. I have always admired the wisdom of Congress, and am

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\* Benjamin Franklin.

sure if they have determin'd wrong on any occasion, it has been owing to their being misinformed and deceived. Their Wisdom is evident in the express orders they have given relative to the application of the money they have ordered to be borrowed in Europe, and I assure you, it will be necessary to repeat them frequently; for notwithstanding the positive orders you have already given, attempts, I am well inform'd, have been made to divert this money into another channel and employ it in the old way. I have no doubt 115 *b* xxxviii\* will 92 *b* xxvii—259 *b* xxxii with 110 *a* xxviii—which would not have been the case had 426 *b* xxviii taken care to 177 *a* xvi, 415 *a* x timely 39 *b* ii of his 305 *b* xxx. 'Tis of infinite importance to have the earliest notice of important resolutions, and some hints how parties stand with you. 'Tis sufficient to mention only the initial letters of people's names, and I must beg you to be particularly cautious in showing my letters to any person whatever except Loudoun; for in times like the present, he that professes himself the greatest Friend to-day may to-morrow prove your bitterest Foe. A Person that I dare say you cou'd not suspect, has, I understand, mention'd on this side the Water by way of reproach to me, the contents of some of my letters to you, which he says you show'd him. In your last letter, (the date of which I have forgot, having put the letter

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\* Deane.

among a number of papers and can't immediately lay my hands upon it) you advise me to be cautious in my public proceedings. I thank you for the hint, at the same time assure you that I have been in all points as circumspect as it was possible for me to be, and if by any intrigues, what I have done with Holland shou'd not be approved by C[ongress], I shall never expect approbation unless I turn Rogue like others, and mind my own private Interest more than that of the Public. I know more than one instance on this side the Water of persons who two years ago to my certain knowledge were not worth one shilling, without a prospect of ever becoming richer, that under the pretext of serving the Public are now become men of capital fortune; one in particular 373 *a* xxxiv, 253 *b* xxi of 169 *b* xxi in\*, I am sure in the above time has made £40,000 sterling without one shilling to begin with of his own, and I fancy M<sup>r</sup>. Ross the friend of M<sup>r</sup>. R. M[orris] has done much more.† I have been

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\* Williams, nephew of Franklin.

† "It is not a little unpleasant to be deprived of that praise which constant toil and assiduity in the public service have deserved, and submit to be traduced by those who, instead of consulting the public interest, when in office, have made immense private fortunes for themselves, and their dependents, who are occupied in two things only—their own gain, and the abuse of every one who will not sacrifice the public to their views. Mr. D. is generally understood to have made £60,000 sterling while he was commissioner; his clerk, from being penniless, keeps

about 18 months in the Public Service, and have not made one shilling for myself, but on the contrary have sacrificed several thousand pounds by leaving England. I have never yet asked for anything from Congress, but when they do send a Commissioner to Holland I profess, as my former line of Life has been changed, I shou'd not dislike that appointment and I think if any change takes place in my present department, there is no person so proper as D<sup>r</sup> Franklin to be sent to Vienna. At all events I am determin'd to attend to the appointment of Virginia. My B<sup>r</sup> and myself have already done a good deal, and I am now endeavoring to borrow the money to compleat their orders; and if there is occasion, you may assure the State that I will do everything that is possible to comply with all their orders. It would

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his horse and his carriage. Mr. Williams, Dr. Franklin's nephew, from being a clerk in a sugar bake-house in London, is become a capital merchant here, loading a number of ships on his own account, while the gentlemen of the first fortunes of America, cannot get remittances or credit for their subsistence. These things are notorious; and there are no visible sources of this prosperity but the public money and state secrets to trade upon." *Arthur Lee to Bland*, 13 December, 1778.

"Sir James Jay insinuated that Mr. Deane had been at least as attentive to his own interest, in dabbling in the English funds and in trade, and in fitting out privateers, as to the public; and said he would give Mr. Deane fifty thousand pounds for his fortune, and said that Dr. Bancroft too had made a fortune."

*John Adams*, III., 138.

have been very agreeable, and will be so still, to know by whose means and from what motives my Commercial line was changed to a Political one. I am inclin'd to believe the true motive was to get me out of the way of my former mercantile associate T. M. I hope you have been sufficiently upon your guard against the Intrigues of C[armichael], whose real character you must be fully possessed of; but if I am not mistaken he has found very able supporters who only mean to make him the instrument of bringing D[eane] to Justice. You know the common saying, "Set one Rogue to catch another," but still, neither the one or the other should be trusted. M<sup>r</sup> D. will no doubt make the most of the credentials and the advocate he carried, or rather, that he went with. Wise men, however, without saying much, will know well how to apprise both justly. *Verbum sapienti sat est.* Take care of yourselves and trust not too much to others. You will excuse my saying one Word with respect to yourself: I know you so well that I am sure you will sacrifice your time and Estate in the Public Service, as you have already done heretofore, without gaining one single shilling for yourself; but do not involve yourself in unnecessary embarrassments that only tend to shield those plunderers who have grown fat on the public spoil. You have been a Member of the Marine and Commercial Committees and Board of War; thro' these

Channels, most of the Public Money must have been spent. I am sure you have not touched any of it, tho' a great deal may have been misapplyed; to save the Public and exculpate yourself you can't be too urgent in insisting on those several bodies making up their accounts and returning them to Congress; and if anything is objected to what has been done, let them answer for it who have had the chief direction and have fingered the Public money. While writing I have received considerable pleasure in learning by accident from the American papers how Congress has treated the 2<sup>d</sup> foolish and impertinent letter from the British Commissioners. Indeed, Governor Johnstone should not be permitted to send his silly and ridiculous, tho' wicked and infamous, letters into the Country. I am assured that 3 months [ago orders] were sent to the B. Commissioners to treat with you on your own terms, but since that, the B. Ministry, or rather their Master, growing bold on a few French prizes being taken, and the hopes that Count D'Estaing's fleet will be destroyed, the present determination is to continue the War another year, and Howe is to return to the command. Thus you see their determinations change like the wind, but you may decide positively yourself whether the War will be continued another year or not, when you know the full issue of this Campaign; for Nothing but dire [necessity] will compel the

silly Mule, to relinquish his wicked attempts against you, therefore provide accordingly and in time. I trust you will not quit Congress until Peace and regular order afterwards is establish'd, unless you should be call'd home to fill the important place of Governor there.

Heaven bless you. Adieu.

13 December 78. I am obliged to you for the Congress manifesto, which looks well. If they have taken proper measures to get information of what is plan'd at N. Y., they may give timely notice at Cha<sup>s</sup> Town of the expedition, in which it may fail of success, for the chances must be against them unless the people in Carolina are taken by surprize; this expedition and the forces sent to the W. Indies as must weaken Clinton so much that I should hope Washington will return the Compliment to N. Y., which they intend for Cha<sup>s</sup> Town Nothing would have been more easy if Count D'Estaing had gone straight there from Boston; but things in that squadron have gone hitherto in such a train from the beginning that I expect nothing of eclat from the end. I never expected any good from Penet's house as my former Letters will tell, but it seems to me quite necessary that you should give immediate and repeated notice to the State of the conduct of this house; for Penet has gone out there near 4 months ago, and you know how he is calculated to deceive and impose on our

countrymen, fine cloathes a cringing, flattering and lying ges—in whom there cannot be the least confidence placed; that will promise and agree to everything and never perform a single article. Iron *Cannon* can be got at *Leige* of any size, and in any quantity, from 15 to 17 £ the quintal, the transport to a Sea Port about 5 £ the quintal more, which will make 22 £ the quintal ready money; but then they can't be ship'd [erased] and to ship them from Dunkirk [torn out] the risk passing thro' the channel will be fully equal to £ the quintal, so that on the whole if the Cannon at Bourdeaux are deliver'd on board at £ 27 the quintal, if they are sound and good, and the seller will wait for payment till remittances can come by the vessel that carrys them, I think we should not hesitate about taking them, if there is any convoy to send them by, because I take it for granted that sooner or later in their spirit of [devas]tation they will make an attempt on Virginia, against which every provision should be made that is possible. I mean the heavier Cannon, for I suppose you recollect that besides what were order'd by Le Maire and the subsequent Invoice that you had, 20 thirty-six pounders were order'd in May last to erect a fortification at York Town. 50,000 Livres would send as much Iron Cannon as is necessary, with Ball and powder sufficient. Clinton is under great apprehensions for N. Y., and I have no doubt

that the Regiments now on foot in England and Ireland will be sent to him as soon as possible. Cannot the F[rench] Ministry be prevailed on to sent out a force to intercept them on the passage. I wish you had told me whether my draft on the Comm'ee for £ 24000, in favor of Mr. Grand was to be paid or not. This Bill I sent to Mr. Grand from hence the 9th inst., and at same time by Letter advised the Comm'ee of it. Be so good as to let me know by return of post what is done. [Torn out] I suppose the privy Councillor C—t in the Garde [erased]; some other rumors will be consulted before an answer is given to y<sup>r</sup> proposition made to the *Ministers*. We wish you all a happy new year, etc.—Adieu.\*

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TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

FRANKFORT, October 15th, 1778.

*Gentlemen:*

I have the honor of forwarding to you herewith a third copy of a plan of a treaty of amity and commerce, between the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands and the United States of America, which you will perceive was settled by M. de Neufville, as the representative of Mr. Van Berckel, Counsellor Pensionary of the city of Amsterdam, and myself. The Burgomasters of Amsterdam had

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\* From the *Lee Papers* in Harvard University.

authorised Mr. Van Berckel to treat in this business in their name, and the Pensionary regularly authorised M. de Neufville, a capital merchant of Amsterdam, to treat with me. I forwarded two copies of this plan from Paris last month, where I went to communicate what had been done to the Commissioners there, as I did not think myself authorised to proceed any further alone.\* They were fully informed by me of the state of politics in Holland, and that a great deal of management and secrecy in the present stage of the business would be requisite to complete it successfully, be-

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\* Dumas had interested the First Pensionary of Amsterdam in the cause of America, before William Lee appeared upon the scene. Lee, acting through M. de Neufville, a merchant of Amsterdam, received from Van Berckel, the Pensionary, a declaration of the good intentions of Amsterdam, given on the supposition that it was being made to one of the Commissioners at Paris. Dumas very naturally complained of this attempt of Lee to undermine him, "when I thought he had enough to do to fulfil his commissions through Germany, and, therefore, was very open and unaware in my letters to him."

The framing of this treaty was a piece of unnecessary activity on the part of Lee, as well as of Van Berckel and de Neufville. Amsterdam repudiated the venture, Congress never approved it, and even the Commissioners at Paris refused to give it any consideration. It is of historical moment only because the paper was taken by the British when Henry Laurens was captured, and was made the occasion for such demands of the Dutch that they were driven into war.

The treaty is printed in full in *Sparks' Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, I., 608.

cause the English party having the Prince of Orange at its head is very powerful, and might effectually obstruct the progress, if the negotiation comes to their knowledge before the Pensionary and Burgomasters have made sure of carrying the point in the Assembly of the States-General.

The further progress in this business your Commissioners at Paris will no doubt communicate to you. However, it appears to me of no inconsiderable importance that I have obtained from the Pensionary an engagement, that the States-General shall not take any measures that may be injurious to the United States of America, provided America shall not take any measures injurious to Holland. This engagement the Pensionary is alone capable of complying with, because his single negative is sufficient to prevent the States-General from entering into any such measures, and consequently the States will be prevented from giving any aid to Great Britain against our good ally, France.

I have so often given you a full account of the situation of affairs in this quarter of the world, that I have little to add on that subject. Though the King of Prussia was prevented, by the critical situation of politics here, from complying with the promise he had made of acknowledging our independence as soon as France had done so, I thought it proper to write to his Minister to know whether our privateers and armed vessels would be per-

mitted to enter and refit in the Prussian ports; to which he replied, that his Majesty's absence from Berlin, and his continual application to the great object in which he is engaged, prevents him from being able at present to make me a favorable reply, but he hopes that circumstances will soon enable them to make us more advantageous proposals than they have already done.

The campaign has ended for this year, and nothing material has passed. There are some politicians who think the winter negotiations will produce peace, and if they do, I think the King of Prussia will not then hesitate to enter into a treaty with us. As to the Court of Vienna, you know my commission only authorized me to treat with the Emperor, who has been since the beginning of April with his armies in Bohemia; however, while I was at that Court our affairs could not be advanced there, because both the Emperor and the King of Prussia stand in the same predicament with respect to Hanover, which has now increased its army to near thirty thousand men. The Emperor wishes to keep Hanover neuter, and the King is exerting all his political abilities to have the Hanoverian army active on his side. This winter will, it is generally believed, decide the part that Hanover will take if the war continues in Germany, in which case the opposite party will soon join issue with us; in the meantime, we must have patience,

as at present neither side can in prudence enter into any measures with us, unless France makes a point of it.

With the advice of the French Ambassador at Vienna I shall remain here, as being a central place for Germany, until we can see with more precision how to direct our future operations. I understood from his Excellency Count de Vergennes, when I saw him at Versailles last month, that he thought our business by and by would go forward at Vienna. As the Court of Versailles can at any time influence that of Vienna with respect to us, I presume some plan of that sort is now in agitation, of which I expect due information from his Excellency the Baron de Breteuil at Vienna; but I must remind you that, under my present commission, I have no authority to conclude, or even to treat of any thing with this Court. This I explained fully to you in my letters last winter, which you must have received.

I am, gentlemen, with the highest esteem and regard, &c.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT, 18 October, 1778.

*Dear Brother:*

I wrote to you the 4th and 8th, which I dare say you will particularly answer as soon as you can. I thank you for the intelligence relative to the

operations at Rhode Island. You have with this, some packets for America, which I request your particular care of: let them only be sent by some or the most probably safe conveyances, viz., an express that you can trust, taking a receipt for them, to be transmitted to me. Whether it is owing to the measures of the Old Fox I know not, but certain it is, that since my return Old D[una]js has not answered two letters I wrote to him, tho' before he was always precisely punctual. Perhaps he may be traced out in some of his manœuvres. Don't you think that by watching a favorable movement for the application, we might obtain all the cannon and ammunition we want?

Mons<sup>t</sup> Beaumarchais's great ship, the Roderigue, was loaded fully out, and the whole cargo was purchased by the State of Virginia. If it can be done conveniently, I cou'd wish to know what this cargo consisted of, because 'tis more than probable that most of the articles were such as I was before desired to send. Surely this ship bro't letters for me, and I don't suppose it will be offensive to inquire for them.

We have no news in this quarter, as the great armies are returned to winter, the K. of P. in Silesia, and P. H. in Saxony.

I wish I could whisper in Mr. S[arti]ne's ear the necessity of taking care of the French commerce, which would be infinitely better done by strong

convoy and keeping the best sailing frigates and men of war cruizing after the Privateers and armed vessels, than by great fleets peeping out of port and returning *re infecta*. The valuable prizes already taken will make the people in En[glan]d mad for a continuance of the game. So that Lord Sandwich will have every man's aid to cover his past iniquities. Every moment I expect Mrs. L. to tumble to pieces. The little Gen<sup>l</sup> has been unwell for some time, and is now very thin. The young lady is as fresh as a rose, and as frolicksome as a young fawn. Let me have I pray you the earliest advice of what you received from America. Our best love attend you and Ludwell. Adieu.

Notwithstanding the late affectation of throwing aside the title of Doctor, I see your neighbor at P[ass]y is among the list of M. D.'s lately incorporated by his most Christian Majesty for examining and licensing all quack medicines. How does this square with the resolve of Congress relative to those they employ in foreign offices? Is it not something of a piece with the snuff box and picture?

(No Signature)\*

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\* Addressed to "His Excellency Arthur Lee, Esq<sup>r</sup>. Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America to His Most Christian Majesty, at Paris."

## COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO WILLIAM LEE.

PHILADELPHIA, October 28th, 1778.

*Sir:*

The enclosed resolve, it is hoped, will be productive of singular advantage, so far as relates to you, who must depend greatly for American intelligence on your connexions in Paris. Congress have been and are exceedingly loaded with business, and of late have met with some singular interruptions in the intended general arrangement of their foreign affairs, so that they have yet only decided in respect to Dr. Franklin, their Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of France.

Our first and most pressing business is the appreciation of our currency. This point accomplished, our enemies themselves will acknowledge their hopes of conquering us at an end. The British Commissioners, sent on a foolish and wicked errand to America, are returning home completely disappointed; and there is reason, from appearances, to think that the land forces of Britain are gradually withdrawing from these States. It is probable that the Marquis de la Fayette, by whom this letter goes, will obtain in Boston further knowledge than we now have of the destination of a fleet lately departed from New York, amounting to about one hundred and fifty sail.

We shall desire Mr. Adams to give you all possible information on the arrival of this packet, and shall soon despatch other letters from this part.

With hearty prayers for your welfare, we are, sir,  
your affectionate friends,

R. H. LEE,  
JAMES LOVELL.

[From the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 12 December, 1778.]

*To the Printer:*

Observing that Mr. Deane in his late publication says that it is probable that the Honorable William Lee, Esquire, Commissioner of the United States at the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, and Commercial Agent for the Congress in Europe, still holds the office of Alderman of the city of London, I have consulted on this point the Royal Kalendar, or Annual Register, for the year 1778, and find the following list of Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the city of London for the year 1778:—

*The Right Honorable Sir James Esdaile,  
Knight Lord Mayor.*

Wards.

Bridge Without,	{ Robert Alsop, Esq., Father of the City.
Farringdon Within,	William Bridger, Esq.
Portsoken,	{ Right Hon. Thomas Har- ley.
Bread-street,	Brass Crosby.
Bishops Gate,	James Townshend, Esq.
Queenhithe,	Frederick Bull, Esq.
Farringdon Without,	John Wilkes, Esq.
Langham,	John Sawbridge, Esq.
Aldersgate	Sir Thomas Halifax.
Recorder,	John Glynn,
Cripplegate,	Sir James Esdaile.
Castle Baynard,	Samuel Plumbe, Esq.
Cornhill,	Brackley Kennet, Esq.
Cheap,	John Kirkman, Esq.

Billingsgate,	Richard Oliver, Esq.
Lime-street,	Sir Watkin Lewis.
Brassishaw,	William Plomer, Esq.
Walbrook,	Nathaniel Thomas, Esq.
Coleman-street,	Robert Peckham, Esq.
Cordwainer,	George Hayley, Esq.
Vintry,	Nathaniel Newnham, Esq.
Aldgate,	*WILLIAM LEE, Esq.
Broad-street,	Richard Clarke, Esq.
Bridge Within,	Thomas Woolridge, Esq.
Dowgate,	John Hart, Esq.
Candlewick,	Thomas Wright, Esq.
Tower,	Evan Pugh, Esq.

OBSERVATOR.

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\* Cum tot sustineas, et tanta negotia solus,  
— in publica commoda peccem  
Si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Cæsar.—*Hor.*

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[From the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 16 December, 1778.]  
*To the Printer of the PENNSYLVANIA PACKET:*

Your inserting the following extract from the sixth Article of the Confederation of the United States of America, will, I have no doubt, enable the citizens of America fully to judge of the propriety or impropriety of employing William Lee, Esq., an Alderman of the city of London, as an Ambassador of the United States of America at a foreign Court.

— “Nor shall any person holding any office of profit or trust under the United States, or any of them,

accept of any present, emolument, office or title of any kind whatsoever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State."

PLAIN SENSE.

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TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

FRANKFORT IN GERMANY, 20 December, 1778.

You will receive with this, my dear Sir, some papers that will in part inform you of what has passed in Holland, relative to the piracy that has been practised by the British men-of-war, armed vessels, &c., on the Dutch trade.

The British partizans, headed by the Prince of Orange and aided by British guineas, had nearly prevailed to destroy the freedom of the Dutch commerce, and overthrow the rights of the Republic; but the firmness of the Regency and Pensionary of Amsterdam, supported by the Body of the Merchants, at the head of whom was placed Mons<sup>t</sup> Jean de Neufville, has hitherto saved the Republic from the evils it was threatened with, and the patriotic party seems to gather strength; for on the last question in the General Assembly of the States, two other cities, and three members of the nobility voted with Amsterdam, so that by perseverance it is expected the patriotic measures will finally prevail; all which would be greatly to our advantage.

If Col. F. is at Congress, you will of course com-

municate this to him; if he is not, please to read this letter and then forward it to him.

This being a very uncertain conveyance I can't be very particular.

I have wrote frequently to Congress, from whom I have not heard of a later date than May; nor do I learn, that the gentlemen at Paris are much better informed than me.

The English papers tell us of a thousand divisions and distractions in America, and even in Congress, not a word of which do I believe, tho' Gov<sup>r</sup> Johnstone insists that a great deal of his money was received, which was laid out to produce these effects.

Tho' there has not been any general battle in this country, yet there has been on the whole a great deal of fighting between the Austrians and Prussians, nor have they ceased until the quantity of snow that has fallen seems to have made them a little quiet. Prince Repuin has arrived at Breslau in Silesia (where the King of Prussia had fixed his winter quarters), as Commissioner from the Court of Russia, to meet a Commissioner from France as mediators to make peace between Austria and Russia; however I do not find that the French Commissioner is yet named, nor any from Austria, for it is understood that the place is not yet agreed upon; France and Austria naming Augsburg or Nuremburg, while Russia and Prussia fix on Bres-

lau. In my private opinion it will be impracticable to bring about peace this winter; the King of Russia has got possession of Austrian Silesia, which he easily will not relinquish; while Austria will make efforts before she cedes that valuable part of her paternal inheritance.

Our affairs of course, in this undecided state of things, must remain at a stand; for unless France makes a point of it on either side, and demands an acknowledgment of American Independence, neither will probably do it, for fear of decidedly throwing Great Britain and Hanover into the opposite scale.

Hitherto France has kept aloof in that respect, probably to avoid being an active party in the German war.

I cannot learn that Great Britain has been able to engage any fresh troops from this quarter for the American war, on the contrary I am assured from all the quarters that she will not be able to procure near the number of recruits necessary to complete the German corps now in America.

You ought to have the earliest intelligence from Paris of what is going on in England; my remote situation prevents me from writing so often as I should otherwise do.

The designs of the British ministry can't be exactly understood, because their plans are changed so frequently; however I think they are determined

on essaying another campaign to recover America; and that most of their operations will be of the predatory kind, and ravaging the Back country with the Indians. They may be puzzled by threatening an invasion of Canada and Nova Scotia, being as well as possible prepared for any sudden attempt on the coast of Virginia, and on Charleston, which from resentment Clinton will wish to destroy; and by sending an effectual body against St. Augustine, the nest of Pirates.

Tho' if the French fleet keep on the American coast, many of their schemes must as heretofore prove abortive.

I can't help expecting that during the winter, in the time of Clinton's weakness, some successful attempt will be made on New York; for believe me the best method is to keep the enemy in perpetual alarm by continual attacks.

A court martial is to be held on Admiral Keppel on the complaint of Sir Hugh Paliser, for misconduct in the engagement of the 27 last July with the French fleet; it is supposed Paliser will be tried also. It is supposed as the King and ministry hate Keppel, that he will be sacrificed tho' innocent, and Paliser being a favorite will escape, tho' guilty; which I wish with all my heart may happen as most likely to create a mutiny in the fleet.

At all events a good deal of hot blood will be created, and I hope all the Whigs will be taught

how dangerous it is to trust their lives and reputations in the hands of the present ministry.

'Tis my duty to mention and you may be assured of the fact, that Lord North declared publickly in the House of Commons, that if the Congress had assented to treat on the terms proposed by the British commission, he would not have confirmed them; after this, what American in his senses can listen one moment to any terms whatsoever, proposed by the British ministry, unless they are warranted by a plain and positive Act of Parliament? This should be published through all America, and if 'tis necessary you may give me for the author.

M<sup>r</sup>. Deane it seems has written over that Congress had plans of changing all their appointments in Europe, and that he was coming over in a very lucrative employment.\*

I had no doubt that he and his coadjutor Carmichael would carry on intrigue and trick wherever they were; but my opinion of Congress must be greatly changed from what it is, before I can believe it will be deluded by them: however I trust you will give me the earliest information if any changes are made or intended. \* \* \*

Farewell.

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\* There was a plan for appointing Deane to Holland.

## COMMISSIONERS TO WILLIAM LEE.

PASSY, 13 January, 1779.

*Sir:*

The letter which you did us the honor to write us on the 15th of December we have received. As we have heard nothing further of the Congress in Germany, which you inform us was talked of, we presume that no such measure will take place.

However, whether there be a Congress or not, we cannot comply with the terms of the gentleman you mention, nor advise him to take any steps in the business.

We have also the honor of your letter of the 9th of December, informing us of your draft upon us for twenty-four thousand livres, at one month's date, payable to Mr. Grand. The bill of exchange itself has also been presented to us, and accepted.

We have the honor to be, &c.,

B. FRANKLIN,  
ARTHUR LEE.  
JOHN ADAMS.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT, 27 January, [1779.]

I wrote the 19 directed to Challiot, and y<sup>e</sup> 23d under cover to y<sup>e</sup> Banker. Yesterday received yours of the 20th. The packet was received right. One letter by mistake was not inclosed. The address of Durbrick & Co: is *au soin de Mons<sup>r</sup>. F.*

*Bowenes, Nego: a Ostend.* Loudoun only says 300 and odd dollars were lent Maj<sup>t</sup> Wrixon; but whether the odd number was *one* or *ninety-nine*, I don't know. Capt. Molesworth, brother to your acquaintance the Major, called at T[owe]r Hill, in September last, and left his address, which he desired might be sent to you and me. You know best if he is wanted by *Congress* or for their own purposes in *Virginia*. The inclosed please to forward. There is no saying here whether the *ship* is *dear* or *cheap*. If any thing is wrong the agent is to blame, because he is perfectly acquainted with these things, and had formerly a good character for honesty.

The very heavy losses the French commerce have sustained must in a great measure put a stop to all the F. trade, and in particular that to America, where the risk is so great, and the expence so high in the proportion of the fund, which must be layed out in the vessel, that the goods ought to sell immensely high, to bring any profit to the adventurer; but my last advices from Virginia and Carolina in October, mention the price of tobacco and other things so enormously high, that no *extra-ordinary* profit will remain even if the vessel of the adventurer should return safe. The plan of *Holker & Co.*, seems to be a pretty sure one on the supposition that *America* is sure of *Independence*, of which there seems to be little doubt. We are be-

ginning to freeze almost entirely; much colder, tho' clear, than in Virginia, which does not much agree with any of us, and will consequently stop William's journey for the present. Give us the news from America as soon as you get it. Accept all our loves.

(No signature).\*

TO ARTHUR LEE.

F[RANKFOR]T, 7 February, 1779.

I was impatient to hear from you, when Mr. I[zar]d the 30th ulto. inform'd me that you had been ill for a fortnight, but was then better. I hope sincerely that you are now quite well, and that in a day or two a letter from yourself will tell me so, but least it should be otherwise, this is sent inclosed to Mr. I., as I wou'd not wish to have your mind ruffled, if your body is weak. I do not believe you see the *St. James's Chronicle*. If you do not, you should send for that from 26 to 28 January, No. 2789. In it there is a long letter from Silas Deane, which fills up more than 3 columns, dated Philadelphia, November, 1778, and published in Dunlap's *Pennsylvania Packet*, Dec. 5, 1778, addressed to y<sup>e</sup> free & virtuous citizens

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\* Addressed to "The Honorable Arthur Lee, Esqr. Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America, No. 5 Rue Battailles, a Chaillot, pres Paris."

of America. This letter is entirely a charge against y<sup>e</sup> Lee family. You are the first object and greatest culprit; myself the second, and R. H. L. the next. It is filled with the most impudent falsehoods I ever saw. With respect to myself, I can prove them to be so, and what is more I can prove that he knew some of them to be so at the time he wrote them. Indeed R. H. L. had documents in his hands, and the Secret Committee also to prove some falsehoods. Yet by the New York paper of December 22, it appears that R. H. L., in answer, addresses the public to suspend its judgment until the charges against his family are inquired into. To which Deane replies as Congress is now disposed to listen to his plaints, he has no occasion for the mediation of the people. I can't enter into this extraordinary performance, which tho' very illy written, must be fully answer'd; therefore 'tis quite necessary that you should have the paper. If you do not get it from England I must send you the one I have. 'Tis very clear, however, that Deane not finding Congress disposed to send him back, has impudently asserted falsehoods, in order to get one or both of us recall'd to answer them; in which case his chief object would be answered of having us displaced like himself.\* I shall prepare

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\* The knowledge of Deane's address affected Adams quite as strongly as it did the Lees, and led to the expression of opinions so heated as to at once deprive Adams' judgment in the matter

my answer directly; but I wish for your opinion, whether it will be most prudent to forward it immediately, or wait 'till we hear from Congress; and as this is an address to the People, whether an answer also should not be given to the people besides what is sent to Congress. On these two points I

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of much weight. It was "one of the most wicked and abominable productions that ever sprang from a human heart; that there was no safety in integrity against such a man; that I should wait upon the Count de Vergennes and the other ministers, and see in what light they considered this conduct of Mr. Deane; that if they and their representatives in America were determined to countenance and support by their influence such men and measures in America, it was no matter how soon the alliance was broke; that no evil could be greater, nor any government worse, than the toleration of such conduct." Deane's conduct was an evidence of "such a complication of vile passions, of vanity, arrogance, and presumption, of malice, envy, and revenge, and at the same time of such wickedness, indiscretion, and folly, as ought to unite every honest and wise man against him; that there appeared to me no alternative left but the ruin of Mr. Deane or the ruin of his country; that he appeared to me in the light of a wild boar, that ought to be hunted down for the benefit of mankind; . . . that this measure of his appeared to me to be so decisive against him, that I had given him up to Satan to be buffeted." He was greatly perturbed for days: he foresaw the dissolution of the Constitution; the confidence of the French court would be lost, and the other nations of Europe would be indisposed to treat with America, where now a civil war impended. On the 11th he had already taken the somewhat unusual step of writing to Vergennes a defence of Arthur Lee, and denouncing Deane's paper, a letter that the Count answered diplomatically, disclaiming very properly any concern, as minister, in the matter. On the 12th of February,

beg your answer directly. Tell me also the present disposition of *Spain* with respect to *America*. We are so-so in health, and impatient to hear of your recovery. We send you in the meantime our best wishes.

Farewell.

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

FRANKFORT ON THE MAIN IN GERMANY.

10 February, 1779.

*My dear Brother:*

I wrote you the 20 Dec<sup>t</sup> ult., which if it ever gets to hand will go with this; but the uncertainty and risk will prevent me from writing to Congress or from saying so much to you as I would otherwise do; however I can't refrain from informing you, (which information you may with confidence communicate to those it immediately concerns) that in consequence of the engagements entered into by me with the city of Amsterdam, of which Congress has been repeatedly advised, and the measures I have taken since, the States of Holland first and afterwards the United States of the

1779, he learned of the choice of Franklin to be sole minister at the court of France, and with a sigh of relief, he laid aside the horrid visions he had conjured up, and threw the entire responsibility on to Franklin. March 12th he was at Nantes on his return to America.

J

Deane's address, and the replies it called forth, will be printed in a volume of this series.

Netherlands, have come to a resolution, that if the English ships either visit or interrupt their merchant ships in their commerce, that the United States of the Netherlands will look upon such visitation or interruption, as a declaration of war on the part of England.

This declaration is decisive, not only of the part that Holland will take with France, but also with America.

As to Germany, there has been some time since much talk of peace, but lately the rumor dies away, and in my opinion the chances are much in favor of war.

I am still in continued correspondence with the Courts of Berlin and Vienna, and in my judgment, if peace takes place in Germany, both those courts will immediately acknowledge the Independence of America; and if war continues Prussia, Russia, and Great Britain may be leagued together, when France will join Austria, and the latter enter into a treaty with America.

However I am happy to tell you that Great Britain has been defeated in all her attempts for the last twelve months to get fresh troops from Germany, to prosecute the American war; she cannot even get a sufficient number of recruits to complete the German corps now in America. All the recruits she can get will be a few hundreds; however, I am told that the British ministers mean to

leave Ireland, and even Great Britain, entirely defenceless, in order to send reinforcements sufficient to maintain the ports of New York and Rhode Island, and, if your defenceless situation will admit, to ravage and plunder your sea coasts. You will therefore do well to be prepared in time.

The enclosed papers will speak for themselves, but I am decidedly of opinion that the British agents, the mortal enemies of America, do not wish for anything better at this moment than appeals to the people at large, against Congress. I wish you would not only consult my particular friends, but even Congress itself, before you publish either of the enclosed papers. However, I wish you to communicate them to Congress; and if it is thought decent and proper that either of them should be published, I should wish the address to the public to be published first, and then if Mr. Deane renews his assertions, publish the affidavit.

A full statement shall be transmitted very soon, but in the meanwhile let me intreat you as much as possible to prevent all cabals or parties from obstructing the necessary measures for your security and defence against the horrid machinations of the British ministry and their agents.

As to myself having never solicited anything from Congress, and my present appointments being at first not only highly disagreeable to myself; but, I am sure, contrary to the wishes of my real friends,

yet, being now engaged in the political line, as long as I can be of service to my country, I shall have no objection to continuing in it; however, if Congress shall have determined otherwise, I shall submit without repining.

It must, I should think, at first sight have struck every mind that Mr. Deane, exasperated at his disgrace in being recalled, wished to have those he calls his Enemies put on the same footing; therefore he hazards the most audacious falsehoods to get my brother and myself recalled to answer them; in which his chief point would be carried, and he himself when proved guilty of being *a false accuser* could not be more infamous than he already is.

Remember, I pray you, not to let any of his accounts for the expenditure of publick money finally pass without the most authentic vouchers; upon proper inquiry into this business, I can boldly assert that most infamous transactions will be brought to light. From this apprehension arises M<sup>r</sup> Deane's and D<sup>r</sup> Franklin's mortal hatred to my brother and myself.

Pray call upon the President, M<sup>r</sup> Laurens, to inform Congress of what he has received relative to M<sup>r</sup> Deane from M<sup>r</sup> Lloyd, his friend, from the information of M<sup>r</sup> Carmichael, and what M<sup>r</sup> Izard has wrote relative to D<sup>r</sup> Franklin. \* \* \*

My stay here will probably not be long, for as

the future political system of Europe will be settled by the spring, when that is fixed, I shall be called from hence to prosecute the commands of Congress. I shall conclude therefore with assuring you of the constancy of my affection & esteem.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

F[RANKFOR]T, 21 February, 1779.

*W. Lee* desires me to say that he wrote yesterday acknowledging the receipt of a card of y<sup>e</sup> 12th from *A. Lee*, and he says further that, after the deepest reflection on facts and probabilities, as far as he knows, he cannot decide on the propriety or impropriety of *going to Paris*. Many certain inconveniences are foreseen, without knowing any certain good. Why has such reserve taken place in a business of such importance? It would appear from the last public accounts that *Deane* has been foiled in his schemes, but whether he has or not, 'tis more than probable that interested views of others may occasion the *recall* of *W.* and *A. Lee*. This must now be decided, and where then can be the hurry to go to work in the dark 'till the decision is known, or at least ascertained. In order to determine *W. Lee going to Paris*, he wishes immediately to be informed whether R[ichard] H[enry] L[ee] was at *Congress*, when y<sup>e</sup> last letters

came away; when the decision was likely to be made; some account of the state of *parties*; will *Izard* give a certificate to *W.* and *A. Lee* of what he personally knows; has he been *attacked by Congress or America*; is he likely to *continue as at present*. These and other informations *W. Lee* wishes to have immediately, and also that his letters may be at same time forwarded; and if before they arrive he should see good reason for the jaunt and set off, no inconvenience can arise, because they will be in good hands during his absence. Has *A. Lee* any idea of going to *America* in case of the worst?\* . . .

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\* "We see in the papers a letter of *A. Lee* relative to *Dane*; hasty measures are often injurious. We learn from the papers that the Marquis de Fayette has been some time arrived at Paris, from whence letters, in the old channel, make Dr. F. not only minister plenipotentiary to Versailles, but to all the other Courts in Europe; this is making him K[ing] or rather E[mporer] of America with a witness. America has therefore struggled to a fine purpose to make a Ben. instead of a Gen. her absolute lord and master. . . . Peace in Germany seems now agreed on all sides, therefore it seems there will be work enough soon for *W. Lee* and probably for *Izard*. . . . Mr. Clarkson, Mr. D[ean]e's advocate in Philadelphia, was a Scotch notary; no doubt he thinks at present with his countryman Mr. *Rogers*, that they have the control and command of America under their patron *Robert Morris*." *William Lee to Arthur Lee*, 27 February, 1779.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

FRANKFORT, February 25th, 1779.

*Gentlemen:*

I have the honor of enclosing to you with this a fourth copy of the plan of a treaty, arranged, as you will see, between M. John de Neufville, on the part of the Pensionary and Burgomasters of Amsterdam, and myself on the part of the United States of America. This plan, I presume, will meet with the approbation of Congress; and if it can be carried through in the General Assembly of the Seven United States of the Netherlands, America cannot have any just grounds of complaint. If any further steps are taken by you in this business, it will be necessary to authorize some person to complete it in your name, who must advance it with the States-General as he finds the temper of the times and politics; for it is to be observed, that by their constitution, in all cases of treaties, alliances, peace, or war, the unanimous consent of all the States is requisite; however, it is with pleasure I inform you, that in consequence of the negotiation with Amsterdam, and the correspondence I have kept up with the parties, that city (by far the most important member of their union) has with infinite firmness and resolution opposed all the intrigues of Great Britain, countenanced as it is said by the Prince of Orange, to

involve the Republic in a war against France, and consequently against America.

The efforts of Amsterdam have at last prevailed on the States-General to come to a resolution lately much in our favor; that is, that they insist upon Great Britain's strictly adhering to the treaty of 1674, whereby the Dutch commerce is allowed to be entirely free; and if Great Britain will not accede to this, they will convoy their trade with ships of war, and repel force with force. They are accordingly making a very respectable addition to their navy, the care of which Amsterdam has taken on herself.

With respect to Germany, our affairs seem to wear a more promising aspect than they have done for some time past. Letters of good authority from Vienna, Berlin, and Breslau, the present residence of the King of Prussia, speak with confidence of the terms of peace being fully settled between the House of Austria and Prussia, under the mediation of France and Russia, that of Great Britain being equally slighted by both parties. There has been about ten thousand men raised in this country, under the title of free corps, for the two contending Powers, all of whom will be dismissed as soon as peace is signed, and will be ready to enter into any service that will pay them. It will require infinite address, industry, and management, to prevent Great Britain from gaining advantage from this

circumstance, which will no doubt be attempted by their agent, General Faucet,\* who is now in this country, endeavoring to buy more human flesh to sacrifice to the demon of tyranny in America. To this object I shall apply at present my principal attention, at the same time keeping a watchful eye upon the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, to take advantage of the first favorable opening for us that appears at either.

I think it most probable, that one or both of those Courts will begin a negociation with us, in a very little space of time after the peace between them is finally settled; however, for the present the King of Prussia has formally engaged, by a letter from his Minister, who writes in the King's name, the 17th instant, "that the merchants of North America, who should come with their merchant vessels into the ports of his Majesty to trade there, in merchandise that is not prohibited, should have full liberty, and should be received in all respects as the merchants of other countries." This looks to me as if they wished the trade to be commenced between America and the Prussian dominions; but the European merchants, and especially those who are not accustomed to a foreign commerce, which is almost universally the case with the merchants in the Prussian dominions, are cautious, and do

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\* Faucitt.

not care to venture hastily in a trade which they do not understand. A vessel or two from America, arriving in the port of Emden, would convince the Prussian merchants more of the practicability of this commerce than a volume of the most demonstrative reasoning that ever was written. You will judge then of the propriety of encouraging the American merchants to undertake a trial of this commerce.

This will be delivered to you by Samuel W. Stockton, of New Jersey, who has been with me some months, in the capacity of Secretary to the Commission at the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, for which purpose he left London in May last, where he had been some years pursuing the study of the law. He now returns to his country, because we do not see clearly how the expense of a Secretary is to be supported, since the American Commissioners at the Court of Versailles have lately demurred at paying my draft on them for my expenses, conformably to the resolve of Congress; and though they have allowed me some money, I am given to understand that it is the last I am to expect from them; therefore, if you should agree in opinion with most others on the propriety of keeping up the Commissions in Germany, it will be quite necessary to establish some sure funds to support the expense. Mr. Stockton has received from me 3,732 livres for his expenses, and I am

obliged to refer him to Congress for such further consideration as they may judge he deserves, not having it in my power to make him that compensation for his services to the public which I think him entitled to. However, justice calls upon me to say, that he merits consideration and esteem for his zeal and readiness to serve his country, whenever it was in his power, and therefore I am sure Congress will render him ample retribution.

To Mr. Stockton I refer you for further information relative to the general state of political affairs in this quarter of the world; and expecting shortly another opportunity, I shall write again, when I hope to be able to give you very pleasing accounts of the progress of my negotiations in this country. I have not received any letter or intelligence from you of a later date than May last, therefore I have no reply to make.

I have the honor to be, &c.

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TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

FRANKFORT ON THE MAYNE,  
Germany, 25 February, 1779.

*My dear Brother:*

I have not heard from you, nor of you, but in the English papers, since May last. I have wrote to you repeatedly within that time, some of which letters I hope will reach you, particularly one of the 10<sup>th</sup> instant, via Holland to Boston, enclosed to

Samuel Adams Esq<sup>r</sup>, a copy of which was sent to Paris, to be forwarded from thence. Both these covered my affidavit in reply to M<sup>r</sup> Deane's charge against me in his letter published Dec<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> in Dunlaps' paper, of receiving a share of the commissions charged by the Commercial Agents in France, and a short address to the public, one, or both, or neither, you will publish as Congress shall judge advisable; for in so critical a time for our Country, I would avoid all public contestation, as far as it can possibly be done with propriety and a due attention to one's character. For, unless that is clear, half a man's powers to serve his country are taken away. You have now with this a copy of the affidavit, confirmed by certificates from one of the Commercial Agents and his clerks. I have drawn up a full state of all my proceedings in the public service from the time I first received notice of my being appointed one of the Commercial Agents, until I left Paris in March last to come to Germany. This state shall be sent by the first safe conveyance that is likely to be quick, in which M<sup>r</sup> Deane will be proved to have acted a most reprehensible part, and his *insinuations* to my prejudice will appear as wicked and unjust, as his only positive charge against me will be proved untrue.

I hear by private report that the plot contrived in August or September last by the remnant of the old Junto in Paris and Nantes to injure the repu-

tation of M<sup>r</sup> Schweighauser and his Son in Law, M<sup>r</sup> Dobree, has been transfer'd to the Agents of the Junto in America, where of course the principal censure has been thrown on me and has been industriously propagated from Philadelphia to Maryland and Virginia, because M<sup>r</sup> S. was appointed one of the Commercial Agents by me. I am surprised that so barefaced an attempt to injure me was not immediately quashed, as it cou'd have been done so easily by letting it be known, that I have had nothing to do with that department for many months past, as the Secret or Commercial Committee early in the last year appointed the American Commissioners at Paris, superintending agents of their Commercial affairs. From the experience I have had of the wickedness of our enemies, who I know will not stick at any falsehood or villainy to accomplish their vile purposes, I think it prudent to enclose you a copy of the Baron de Breteuil's letter to me approving of my conduct at Vienna, and also copies of recommendatory letters of M<sup>r</sup> Stockton, who has been with me as Secretary, which you will keep and make known if you find occasion, for 'tis not impossible that some forg'd aspersions may be circulated against my proceedings in Germany; especially as the negotiation I have had with the city of Amsterdam has given mortal offence to a *certain person* \* who wishes to be

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\* Franklin.

esteemed not only the sole legislator for all America, but also the sole and absolute director of all her proceedings. However I pride myself on that measure, and the good effects are visible in the steady and firm opposition of Amsterdam to the designs and intrigues of G. Britain. Congress will certainly pursue that negotiation and leave nothing untried to gain the whole republic of the 7 Provinces, decidedly and openly in our favor. Congress will judge who is the properst person to be employed in that business. It wou'd be at this moment of great advantage to America if she had some active and well informed agent (tho' not in a public character) at the Courts of Petersburg, Copenhagen and Stockholm. This agent shou'd be a Gentleman and by his appointment enabled to keep the better sort of company. If he had any address, he might pave the way for those powers acknowledging our Independency, at least he might prevent G. B—n from getting any assistance or countenance in prosecuting the war against us and France. It will be somewhat unlucky for Amercia if Congress shou'd pay so much attention to the calumny of M<sup>r</sup> Deane, as to leave this de-partment vacant at this critical moment; for now hostilities have ceased between the Emperor and the king of Prussia, and peace is certainly settled, there will be work enough for an American deputy in Germany, and it may happen with a good deal

of management, that the king of Prussia may do more than any other power in negotiating a peace between us and G. Britain. I shall write again on this subject, if I find my plans are likely to take place, which at present wear a favorable appearance.

I have long since commenced some negotiations with Denmark, from whence before long we may expect some favorable issue ; at present things are not so decided as to permit me to speak with certainty, tho' the prospect in general looks so well, that I think it more than probable that our Independence will in a few months be acknowledged by several of the powers in Europe. My family is not very well in health, however we send our best love.

P. S.—I do not mention anything to Congress about M<sup>r</sup> Deane, as it appears to me that it wou'd be irregular, as I only have heard of his proceedings thro' the medium of the public papers.\*

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TO ARTHUR LEE.†

28 February, 1779.

I wrote yesterday to my friend Thomson that I should prepare to set out for *Paris* about the 8th

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\* From the *Arthur Lee Papers*, in Harvard University.

† Addressed to "Monsieur Lotsom, No. 5 Rue Bataille, a Chaillot, pres Paris."

of next month, as soon as answers were received to some letters. This determination will be executed unless sickness, &c., prevents. B[rutus] still continues ill, and I begin to think his course will not be of long duration. However, in the present state of things 'twill be impossible to leave this place. *William Lee* has received a letter from *the French Court*, from *Passy*, saying no regard or notice will be taken of the publications of *Deane*. 'Tis *private* and nothing to *the French Court*.\* *W. Lee*, therefore, advises *A. Lee* without delay (especially before there are any *advices* of —) to get there a letter of *approbation*. Circumstances unknown to *W. Lee* may render such an attempt improper, but as

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\* "Dr. Franklin says in his last letter, that he has no concern or interest in Mr. Deane's accusations." *Arthur Lee's statement.* "I was confined to my bed when Mr. Deane's letter was announced for the next week in the *Courrier de l'Europe*, a paper printed in France, and read through Europe, because it is in the French language. I sent my secretary to Dr. Franklin to desire his concurrence in writing to M. de Vergennes, to request him to forbid the publication of that letter, as it was likely to injure and disgrace the cause of our country. Dr. Franklin not only did not concur, but by not making me an answer he kept me in suspense till my application was too late. Thus this libel upon Congress and their servants was permitted to be circulated through all Europe. Dr. Franklin, like Mr. Deane, appeared totally regardless of the mischief it might do to the public, provided it would defame me." *Memorial of Arthur Lee*, 1 May, 1779.

far as he knows at present, it seems requisite to be done for more reasons than one. Farewell.

(No signature.)\*

\*“There has been no time lost, for I am told the defence, &c., of *W. Lee* is nearly finished. The plot formed at *Passy* before the *departure* of *Deane* seems to have taken by the *appointment* of *Franklin*. It seems to me likely that the whole will succeed. The *disgrace* of *W. Lee* and *A. Lee* does not hurt me so much as the reflection on the unhappy and deplorable situation of *America*, which could induce such measures to be taken to be at the feet of *France*. We say here that the *Peace* in *Germany* is settled and absolutely fixed.” *William Lee to Ralph Izard*, 2 March, 1779. Franklin received intelligence of his appointment as Minister Plenipotentiary at the French Court on 13th February, 1779.

“The English have taken St. Lucia from the French. 'Tis an island of no great consequence, and the French expect every day to hear that D'Estaing has taken Antigua and St. Kitts. Campbell with troops from New York has landed in Georgia and defeated a party of militia. He is to attack South Carolina, where he will probably meet his match. The people all over England have nearly gone mad with joy on Keppel's acquittal, particularly in London, &c., where the people have done greater feats than in Wilkes' time. All ministers' houses were nearly pulled down. This spirit of ye people has done more to bring ye K— and his junto to reason, yn all the opposition in Parliament, where the leaders are playing the same idle tricks as usual. The people unhappily want leaders, more than spirit. There is certainly to be peace in Germany.” *William Lee to E. Browne*, 8 March, 1779.

“The uncertainty of the vessels being gone prevents my writing to Virginia, but if there is time for you, I beg you will write a short line directed to the Honble John Page, Williamsburg, Virg<sup>a</sup>, and tell him the reason I do not write, but assure him

## CONFERENCE WITH FRANKLIN.

PARIS, 15 March, 1779.

Waited this day on the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Doctor Benjamin Franklin, minister plenipo: from the U. S. of America at the Court of Versailles; congratulated him on his appointment; gave him an account of the political state of Germany and Holland, of the danger there was of G. B. getting a considerable number of troops in Germany as soon as the peace between the Emperor and King of Prussia should take place, as there would be 20,000 disbanded, and there were a number of B. agents now dispers'd over Germany waiting to engage them. That I wished him to aid me in an application to the French ministry, to get their influence and assistance in the most effectual measures for preventing so heavy a blow on us. The Doctor replied, that he knew so little about the situation of affairs in the north, he cou'd not meddle in it. I then told

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from me that the B. ministry have ordered Virginia to be invaded as soon as the reinforcements reach Gen'l Clinton at New York, which are about this time sailing from Portsmouth. This information may be depended on. I hope therefore they will provide against it as well as possible, and particularly that they will take care of their public records. This resolution, 'tis reported, has been taken in consequence of some letters intercepted in a vessel taken coming from Virginia to Nantes, one of them from Carter Braxton Esqr<sup>t</sup> in Virginia to Mr. Jno. Ross in Nantes. Some of these letters we shall no doubt see in the English papers." *William Lee to Thomas Lee, Paris, 22 March, 1779.*

him that I had strong reasons for believing as soon as the German peace was settled, the courts of Vienna and Berlin, or at least one of them, wou'd acknowledge our independence, provided the Court of Versailles would assist us in negotiating this business, which I tho't it probable the French ministry would do, if he would go with me to Count Vergennes that we might jointly urge this measure. The Doctor replied that it was a matter to be considered whether it was worth our while to ask any of the Courts of Europe to acknowledge our Independence. This, I confess, astonished me greatly. However, I calmly replied that I tho't it of infinite importance for many reasons, but particularly it appeared to me the most probable way to bring Great Britain to her senses, and to make the K. and his ministers enter into a peace with us, for my first object and wish always had been, and still was, to obtain peace on honorable and independent terms. The Doctor said that I might apply myself to Count Vergennes about it, but he was so ill that he cou'd not go to Versailles. I asked him then if he would write a short letter by me to Count V. excusing his not going with me in person on account of his health, but that he had confer'd with me on the subject of my visit, which he much wish'd to be adopted. I farther urged that it was in some measure necessary, as it was the form in all the Courts of Europe, for the public

ministers of any country, residing at a foreign court, to wait on the ministers of that court, to introduce any subject of his Nation, especially if that subject was in a public capacity. That this mode of proceeding seemed to me more necessary at this particular time as Congress had recommended confidence and harmony to all the representatives to the different Courts, and to show the ministers here that the public business would not be affected by the late extraordinary proceedings of Mr. Deane in America. All that I cou'd urge had no effect, and the Doctor plainly refused either to go with me, or to write by me.

I observ'd to him, that as he had refused to accept or pay the draft I had some time ago drawn on the Commissioners in France for my expences, agreeable to the order of Congress, it seem'd necessary for me to know of him, whether he intended to pursue the same conduct in future, and whether I was to depend on him or not for supplies to support the expences of my commission, that I might inform Congress accordingly. He replyd that he had no money, and therefore would not engage to supply me, for no supplies came from America except tobacco, which was delivered to the Fermiers Generals, under the old contract made by him and Mr. Deane.\*

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\* "Mr. A. Lee has retired from Chaillot to Paris, and his

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PARIS, 17 March, 1779.

Sir:

Your Excellency will most particularly oblige me by laying the enclosed papers before The Honorable Congress of the United States of America, as soon as they come to your hands, with my most humble respects and duty, and I trust their goodness will excuse the length of them; for the field that Mr. Deane has open'd is so large, and the matter so abundant, that it was impossible to comprise even a summary state, so as to be clearly understood within a shorter compass.

I have the honor to be, with the highest respect and consideration.

Your Excellencies, &c.\*

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brother has come on a visit from Frankfort. He talks of a Congress to be held in Germany, and seems to want me to advise his attendance there incognito. I know nothing of it, and, therefore can give no advice about it. He talks of 20,000 men at liberty by the German peace to be hired by the English against us, and would be employed in preventing it. What do you think or learn of these circumstances?" *Franklin to Dumas, 18 March, 1779.* The Congress was that held at Teschen.

\* Endorsed. "Read August 30." Although the defence is dated the 8th of March, I place it after the letter of transmittal.

## TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

8 March, 1779.

*Sir:*

I had not been a great while in France, before I was convinced, from observing the extraordinary manner in which the public business of America was conducted, that some day or other a public enquiry into those proceedings must take place; therefore, as my duty to my country call'd upon me to do, I observ'd with attention such facts and circumstances as came within my knowledge; tho' it must be confess'd that, almost on every occasion, infinite pains seem'd to be taken by the parties most concern'd in those extraordinary transactions, to keep me as much in the dark as possible; therefore 'tis reasonable to suppose that what I did know and observe, is by no means the whole of what was done against the interest and benefit of America.

I had some time since drawn up a short note of several facts, to be at the public service whenever the day of enquiry should arrive; but a late publication in the London newspapers, said to be taken from Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet of December the 5th, 1778, signed S. Deane, and addressed "to the free and virtuous Citizens of America," which has just come to my hands, renders it necessary that I shoud enlarge a little; but I will endeavor to avoid prolixity, as far as a strict regard to truth,

and a clear exposition of facts will admit; which will oblige me in the course of this narrative, often to mention the name of Dr. Franklin, his nephew, Mr. Jonathan Williams, as well as of other persons.

Mr. Deane, in the letter above mentioned, says: "In February, 1777, I received a notification of the appointment of William Lee, Esq<sup>r</sup>, to be one of your Commercial Agents in Europe, of which I gave him notice. As your commercial affairs were, at that time, in such a state as to require much attention and care, I press'd this gentleman, then in England, to come over immediately, and execute his office; but heard nothing from him till the month of June, when he arriv'd at Paris. At this place he continued till about some time in August, when he went to Nantes. There he was loudly call'd to regulate certain affairs, which he prudently declin'd; lest, as he observed, his property in England should be affected. In September or October he return'd to Paris, and there receiv'd his appointment of Commissioner to the Courts of Vienna and Berlin. He continued nevertheless, inactive at Paris, until the month of December, carefully concealing his appointments, which might indeed have militated against his office of Alderman of the city of London, which he had then, and probably does still retain. When the news of General Burgoyne's defeat and surrender arriv'd, it produced a revolution in the minds of many, and among others, inspired your commercial agent and political Commissioner, the Honorable William Lee, Esq<sup>r</sup>, with some degree of activity in your favor. That I may not be under a necessity of

mentioning this Gentleman again, I add here, that he hath since gone to Vienna, having first appointed sundry commercial agents for you at the several ports, and in one instance remov'd the person\* who had faithfully done your business for 2 p<sup>t</sup> C<sup>t</sup>, in favor of another, who is to receive 5 p<sup>t</sup> C<sup>t</sup>, of which, as well as of the like Commission at other places, Mr. Lee receives a share, for superintending 'at Vienna the business on your account, a thousand miles from his place of residence.'

I have with design put the whole of Mr. Deane's charge against me here, because the following state of facts will be the compleatest answer that can be given, and will shew at the same time what induc'd Mr. Deane to make it.

Mr. Deane says "that in February, 1777, I receiv'd a notification of the appointment of William Lee, Esq<sup>r</sup>, to be one of your Commercial Agents in Europe, of which I gave him notice. As your Commercial affairs were, at that time, in such a state as to require much attention and care, I press'd this Gentleman, then in England, to come over immediately and execute his office; but heard nothing from him till the month of June."

About the 21st. of April, 1777, I receivd by the Penny Post in London, a letter from the Honorable Silas Deane, Esq<sup>r</sup>, dated Paris, March the 30th,

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\* Here a note of Mr. Deane's letter mentions Mr. Williams as being the person displaced by me.

1777, directed thus—"To Alderman William Lee, Esq<sup>r</sup>, London," in M<sup>r</sup> Deane's hand-writing and sealed with the initial letters of Mr. Deane's name, vizt. S. D. Mr. Deane's hand-writing being then well known in London, and his name just before, having been often mentioned in almost every company and public Gazette in England, in consequence of the proceedings of John the Painter, I thought at the first moment, that the letter was a snare laid for me by the tools of the ministry; not then conceiving that it was possible for Mr. Deane, who had been entrusted by Congress, to be capable of such indiscretion, or that he had any latent design of injuring me, with whom, at that time, he had no connection, or of injuring my relations, who had never given him any offence that I knew of. The sequel will shew whether I judg'd too favorably of Mr. Deane or not. In this letter, Mr. Deane only informs me, that the Secret Committee of Congress had appointed me joint Commercial Agent with Mr. Thomas Morris, and desiring my immediate *answer*, whether I wou'd accept the appointment or not, as he was to write to America in a few days, and wish'd to communicate my resolution; without saying a single word about the state, nature, or situation of the commercial affairs in France; or in the most distant manner hinting, that my presence was necessary or wishd for: on the contrary, the whole spirit of the letter seemed to say "You need not come."

On the same day that Mr. Deane wrote the above laconic letter of advice to me, he wrote the following letter to Mr. Jonathan Williams, Dr. Franklin's nephew, who had left London, and gone to Paris in about six weeks after Dr. Franklin's arrival in France, and was then at Nantes.

PARIS, 30 March, 1777.

*Dear Sir:*

I wrote you a few days since that we had purchasd the whole Magazine of Monthieu, and inclosed you his order for the delivery. From all appearances of affairs we shall have many concerns at Nantes for some time, and as I have great confidence in you, desire you woud in return have so much in me as freely to state the terms on which you can undertake our business, as I can by no means feel easy at your being in a state of uncertainty on that subject, and it is on our side proper that we should fix on some certain conditions. It is probable that our affairs may amount to five or six hundred thousand livres at Nantes in the course of this year, and if you determine on fixing at Nantes it may give you a good introduction.

The ordinary post from Paris to Nantes is three days, and three days from Nantes to Paris, so that Mr. Deane might have had Mr. Williams' answer with ease, near a fortnight before I received his letter above mentioned: Every person is left to judge for himself of the probability of this answer being receivd, before the letter to me was sent from Paris.

It is proper to mention here, that notwithstanding Mr. Deane acknowledges he was advised in February, 1777, that I was appointed one of the Commercial agents; yet Dr. Franklin and himself entered into a contract in behalf of Congress, with the Farmers General of France on the 24th of March, 1777, to deliver in France in the course of that year five thousand hogsheads, or five million pounds of James and York River tobacco (the best kind that is made in that State) at the rate of forty livres for every hundred French pounds, which make above 107 pounds English, with an allowance of 4 p<sup>r</sup> ct. and eight pounds p<sup>r</sup> hhd. to be deducted from the weight of the tobacco; 2 p<sup>r</sup> ct. discount on the money, and all damaged or rotten tobacco to be cut off; which on some occasions might amount to 40 or 50 p<sup>r</sup> c<sup>t</sup> more; also all the tobacco that Congress could send to France over and above the 5000 hogsheads, was to be delivered to the Farmers General on the same terms, and at the same price; altho' it was then publickly known that M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Morris, as commercial agent, had contracted in the month of January preceding with the same Farmers General for all the tobacco that shoud arrive in any of the ports of France on the public account, during the continuance of the then existing war with Great Britain, either of the growth of any part of Maryland or Virginia, at the rate of seventy livres for every quintal or hundred

pounds; the hogshead to be weighed with the tobacco, and from the gross weight 26 p<sup>r</sup> c<sup>t</sup> was to be deducted for the weight of the cask, trett (?) damage, and every other kind of allowance whatsoever. I shall not make any remarks either on this proceeding of the two honorable commissioners, nor on the difference of advantage to America in the two contracts; the meanest capacity is capable of forming a clear judgment on both; but I must mention, that at this time Dr. Franklin being not only sole minister to the Court of France, but also superintending commercial agent, all the tobacco that arrives now on public account is delivered to the Farmers General under this unequal contract made by Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, which hardly pays the first cost, exclusive of the freight, insurance, &c.

But to return to myself. Altho' the manner of Mr. Deane's letter coming to my hands, its unusual direction, and its contents, occasion'd many reflections in my mind ; yet the urgent desire I not only then had, but always had and still have, to serve my country, immediately decided me to accept the appointment. But I cannot suppose there is any man in the world, who will not join with me in opinion, that it would have been folly in the extreme to answer Mr. Deane by the post ; because my letter being intercepted, would have been sufficient ground for my being put in prison, where I

might have remained untryd to this moment: especially too, as at that time I knew that spys were set to watch me, when I went out of my house, in consequence of an information having been given to a Secretary of State, that I was concerned in a conspiracy with some of the most respectable persons in England, to take away the King's life.\*

I waited therefore to find a private conveyance, and on the 30th of the same month of April 1777, by an American gentleman, who left London that night to go directly to Paris, I wrote to Mr. Deane that I had receivd his letter, and would go over to France to execute the appointment, as soon as I coud possibly settle my affairs in England.

This letter Mr. Deane acknowledged to me in Paris that he had receivd. Indeed he could not quite so well have denyd it; because the gentleman happened to be there in Town. I also wrote to my Brother, Arthur Lee, then one of the commissioners in France, on the 2<sup>d</sup> of May following, that I wou'd go to France, as soon as it was possible to execute the appointment, and requesting him to communicate this determination to those whom it concerned. This letter Mr. A. Lee received, and did communicate my determination to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, before he left Paris to go to

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\* An absurd matter, for which Sayre was arrested and put in the Tower.

Berlin, which was on the 15th of May, 1777. Mr. A. Lee is now in possession of my letter, and is ready to verify, when called upon, that he did make this communication. I set to work with the greatest diligence to settle my affairs; well knowing that when I left England it must be forever, and probably, too, all the property that I left behind me: but every one in the least conversant in trade will know, that it must require a considerable time for any London Merchant, who has been in a pretty extensive commerce for upwards of seven years, to settle finally and close all his business. However, hearing from general report, that the commercial affairs of America in France were in disorder, and very ill conducted, I determined to sacrifice my private concerns, to the public service of my Country; and for that end, to leave London immediately. As it was impossible in so short a time to settle my own business fully, I was obliged to leave it unfinish'd, and much of my property behind; by which I can make it appear that my private fortune has suffer'd to the amount of several thousand pounds sterling. Added to this, I left Mrs. Lee not recovered from her lying in, with an infant about three weeks old. I quitted London the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, 1777, and arriv'd in Paris the 11<sup>th</sup> of June: I wrote to Mr. Deane immediately, informing him of my arrival, and of my being somewhat fatigued with my journey, which prevented

my waiting on him that evening ; but that I wou'd do myself the pleasure of calling on him the next morning, if he would be so good as to let me know what hour woud be most agreeable to him. To this I receivd in answer the following curious card :

Mr. Deane has the honor of presenting his compliments to Mr. Lee. Mr. Deane will be at his Hotel to-morrow morning at 10 o'clock."

Notwithstanding this reply, I went to Mr. Deane precisely at 10 o'clock the next morning, vitz., June the 12th. I told him that I was come in consequence of the letter he had been pleased to write to me, informing me of the Secret Committee of Congress having appointed me their Commercial Agent, and desired to know if he had the appointment. He replyd he had not. I then askd, if he or the other Commissioners had any authority, under which I cou'd act. He answered that he || had not, nor did he believe the other Commissioners had; but he had a private letter from Robert Morris, Esq<sup>r</sup>, Chairman of the Secret Committee, mentioning my appointment, and desiring him to give me notice of it; but the letter being a long one, and chiefly on private business, he cou'd not give it to me. He then entered into a long detail about the conduct of Mr. Thomas Morris, joint agent with me, and said that a Mr. Ross (a Scotch Merchant that had been some time in Philadelphia, |

but had left it in 1776, and gone to Hamburgh, from whence he had come at the request of Robert Morris, Esq<sup>r</sup>) was then at Nantes, settling the former transactions of Mr. Thomas Morris; which were in a very disordered state, and until Mr. Ross had finished that business, he thought it wou'd not be adviseable for me to go to Nantes; however when Dr. Franklin came, who was expected every moment, they woud talk over the business together. I replyd that I thought it my duty, and that I was ready and willing to render the public every service in my power; however, being entirely unacquainted with the nature, extent and situation of the Committee's business, and also of the then state of polities in France, I shou'd submit my conduct wholly to the direction of himself and Dr. Franklin, who, knowing those things at that time much better than myself, were the best judges of what was proper to be done for our Country's benefit. I waited for Dr. Franklin till 2 o'clock, who not coming when dinner being ready to be brought on the table, and not being asked to stay longer, I went away, but was desird by Mr. Deane, to call again in the evening, as Dr. Franklin woud certainly be there then. I did call at Mr. Deane's the same evening, but did not have the pleasure of meeting Dr. Franklin. I went to Passy the next morning, when Dr. Franklin was come to town. I return'd to Mr. Deane's where I found Dr. Frank-

lin. After waiting in an ante-chamber about an hour and a half, I had the honor of a conference with the two gentlemen, Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, which was nearly the same as what had passd the day before between Mr. Deane and myself; and the conclusion was, their joint opinion and advice, that I should not go to Nantes, till Mr. Ross had finished the business he was then about; especially too, as it did not appear, that I had any regular authority from the Committee to act. I waited accordingly in Paris 'till the latter end of July (except a little excursion of a few days to Havre de Grace) very frequently calling on Mr. Deane, and often on Dr. Franklin; to both of whom I always express'd my anxiety to enter on the public business, if there was any for me to do. Mr. Deane, who kept up the correspondence at Nantes, and indeed seem'd on all occasions to act the part of the principal mercantile agent, continually re- plyd, that Mr. Ross had not finishd the business he was upon; but expected to end it very soon. About the latter end of June, while I was thus waiting in Paris, under the directions of Mr. Deane and Dr. Franklin, several prizes were sent into France, that had been taken by the Continental arind vessels; Reprisal, Capt. Wickes; Lexington, Capt. Johnson; and Dolphin, Captain Nicholson. These prizes Mr. Thomas Morris claimd the disposal of, under the Secret Committee's appoint-

ment and instructions; but Mr. Deane thought proper to order Mr. Williams to get possession of, and dispose of them; and when Capt. Wickes, who acted as Commodore, returnd into port, he had orders from Mr. Deane to put the prizes made by his little squadron into the hands of Mr. Williams, who was also appointed to superintend the refitting of these arm'd vessels. These orders and directions of Mr. Deane, he says, were given with the consent and approbation of Dr. Franklin. Be that as it will, Mr. Morris opposd the execution of them, and remonstrated against them by letters to Mr. Deane, to whom he sent a copy of the Committee's instructions relative to prizes sent into France. This made no alteration in Mr. Deane's conduct; and what is still more remarkable, tho' I had been in Paris for some time, and was then waiting there, under the advice of Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, always ready at any moment to enter on the public business, for which purpose I had left England, the whole of this transaction about the prizes was kept a profound secret from me. About the latter end of July, when Mr. Morris's opposition had given Mr. Deane's agent, Mr. Williams, a good deal of trouble; and seemd as if Mr. Morris was determin'd to thwart the schemes that had been plan'd to take his business from him (the day my Brother, Arthur Lee, returned to Paris from Berlin), Mr. Deane told me that he under-

stood my letters of appointment, from the Secret Committee of Congress were then, and had been for some time, in the hands of Mr. Morris at Nantes; and as Mr. Ross had not been able to compleat the settlement of Mr. Morris's former transactions, he thought I had better go down to Nantes. I waited on Dr. Franklin at Passy the next morning, and informd him of what Mr. Deane had told me the day before; when Dr. Franklin agreed in opinion with Mr. Deane, that it was adviseable for me to go to Nantes; but neither by the one nor the other was a syllable mention'd to me about the affair of the prizes.

They then wrote me the following letter:

PARIS, 31 July, 1777.

*Sir:*

The hope of obtaining previously by means of Mr. Ross a clear state of Mr. Morris's proceedings in the commercial affairs of the Congress (which was our inducement to advise your stay here for some time) being vanish'd, we now think it prudent and right for you to proceed to Nantes as soon as possible, and there take such measures as to you shall appear most for the public interest, which we accordingly advise you to do; and are with great esteem, sir, your most obedient  
hble servants.

B. FRANKLIN,  
SILAS DEANE.

Wm. Lee, Esq?

I accordingly left Paris in the morning of the 2nd. of August to proceed to Nantes. I hope to be

excused for mentioning here a circumstance, tho' it does not immediately relate to me; because it marks, as strongly as what has preceded, the spirit with which the public business of America was conducted at that time at Paris.

Early in June, 1777, the owner of the ship Richard Penn, mounting 14 guns (a sufficient force then to keep off the British letters of mark, a fine vessel and good sailer, built at Philadelphia) came to Paris and offerd to sell her to the commissioners, to carry stores, &c, to America. She cou'd have been in a very few weeks in any port of France ready to take in her Cargo for America. The owner, I believe, did not wish for a higher price than £2500 sterling or at the most £3000 sterling. This offer, however, was refus'd, because it was plan'd for Mr. Williams to buy a vessel at Nantes, just then put upon the stocks, which did not sail from France 'till the last of February or March, 1778, and cost the public about £15,000 sterling. It was also plan'd, to serve another favorite, to buy an old vessel at Havre de Grace; which, after much expence, and remaining in port several months, was sold, or the property chang'd, at how much loss to the public, I will not pretend to say; and also to serve some other purpose, a large and extraordinary vessel in her construction, was began to be built in Holland, which after costing up-wards of 300,000 livres of the public money, was

left where she was began to be built, and I believe at this moment has not been fitted to go to sea. From these proceedings, and a multitude of others of a similar, or more glaring nature, it happened that the supplies for the army, which were ordered in September or October, 1776, were not all even despatched from France 'till February and March, 1778; altho' during that period several millions of public money pass'd thro' the Commissioners' hands; or at least were disburs'd under their directions.

Such proceedings certainly merit public enquiry; and no doubt that will take place, when things are more compos'd than they are at the present. It was many days after my arrival at Nantes, before I coud get a sight of Mr. Morris: but at the first interview he inform'd me of the before mention'd transactions relative to the prizes; which 'till that moment had been conceal'd from me; and complain'd as much of Mr. Deane's conduct in general, as Mr. Deane had before complain'd of him. As I was conscious of having been in Paris before the commencement of this transaction; and had been waiting there during the whole time of its negotiation, under the express advice of Dr. Franklin and Mr. Silas Deane, and to their knowledge ready at any moment to enter on the public business; it appear'd wonderfully strange that neither of these gentlemen had said one word to me on the subject:

especially as Mr. Morris inform'd me there had been a considerable correspondence about it. On further enquiry, I found that Mr. Williams, in consequence of his orders, had, with the assistance of some Frenchmen, one of them named Peltier du Doyer, got possession of some of those prizes, which then remain'd unsold, and continued so when I left Nantes in October; tho' one of them was almost new and a well form'd valuable brig: but wishing to avoid as much as possible entering warmly into the resentments on either side, I only agreed with Mr. Morris on writing a civil joint letter to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, stating some of the injuries to the public that had arisen from Mr. Williams being appointed to sell the prizes, in contradiction to the Secret Committee's instructions to us; at the same time sending an extract  
 ♠ from their instructions, with which we presum'd they were unacquainted, otherwise the orders wou'd not have been given to Mr. Williams and Captain Wickes as before mention'd; which we requested they wou'd countermand, that the public business might not be any farther interrupted. To this letter no answer was ever given, nor were the orders it complain'd of ever recalled.\*

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\* So far from these orders being recalled, Mr. Williams writes thus to Mr. Deane, August 21st, 1777. "I have received your favor of the 18th Instant, and observe that matters relative to ships of war and prizes are to continue as they were." And

The whole of my proceedings while at Nantes have been so often and so fully communicated to the Secret Committee, that it is unnecessary to repeat them here; but it may not be amiss to mention that the only cargo on the public account that came under my management at Nantes, was 315 barrels of rice, received by the Abigail, Captain Jenne from Charles Town; which vessel was dispatched back again in three weeks; on which inward cargo and the returns by Captain Jenne, my commission amounted to 1761 livres, 7 sols, which is the whole that I can properly say I have receiv'd for my public commercial agency at Nantes.

'Tis not my business here to say anything about Mr. Thomas Morris; but Mr. Deane says I "was here loudly call'd to regulate certain affairs, which I prudently declin'd." I can only say it was very prudent in him to decline mentioning what those certain affairs were; because he cou'd then have been brought to conviction, as he will be in every thing he has particularly mentioned as a charge against me.

I shall leave these "certain affairs" then with

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Capt. Weeks, in reply to a letter from me desiring he would put the prizes into the hands of Mr. Morris and myself agreeable to the Secret Committee's instructions, writes to me thus the 9th of September, 1777, "As to the prizes, they are at the disposal of the honorable Commissioners at Paris, whose orders I have received on this head, and must act in conformity."

Mr. Deane; being very confident that he cannot easily invent any, in which Congress is concern'd, that I declin'd to regulate when it was in my power. 'Tis too evident to want any proof, that it was my earnest endeavor to regulate the public business in various instances, which has brought on me Mr. Deane's resentment, as well as the ill will of others of the same character as himself. During my residence at Nantes, besides the before mention'd joint letter from Mr. Morris and myself, I wrote several times to the honorable the American Commissioners at Paris: some of the letters on affairs of consequence; to none of which did I receive any answer. Late in September being advised by a private letter of my being appointed a Commissioner to the Courts of Vienna and Berlin, I left Nantes the 2d. of October, 1777, to go to Paris. On the 6th of October I saw the Commissioners, who deliver'd me my commission; and, an express just then setting off with despatches to Congress, I had only time to write the following short letter:

[Here was inserted his letter of 5 October, 1777, printed, p. 254, note, *ante.*]

This letter with the Commissioners' letter to Congress, and those written particularly by Arthur Lee, Esqr<sup>r</sup>, that shou'd have gone by the same conveyance, were stopp'd, or rather stolen, by some person; and tho' Congress has ordered this black

transaction to be enquir'd into, yet so many obstacles have been thrown in the way, that the culprit has not been discover'd.

A few days after this (vizt on the 13th day of October, 1777,) I had by appointment, a conference at Passy, with the three Commissioners of Congress at the Court of Versailles, vizt. the honorable Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee, Esqrs., at which, by my desire, the honorable Ralph Izard, Esq<sup>r</sup>, commissioner to the court of Tuscany, attended also. At this meeting I laid before the Commissioners the several abuses and mismanagements of the commercial business of Congress, and the disorder that those affairs were then in; which I had found impossible to remedy or rectify; for they arose not so much from the conduct of my colleague, as from Mr. Williams being appointed to interfere with us in our business, and take out of our hands the sale of prizes, which had been entrusted to us by the Secret Committee: against which appointment Mr. Morris and myself had written a joint letter to Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane, which they did not answer. I mention'd also the prizes then remaining unsold, and wasting every day in value for want of care: all of which proceeded from the contest about the right of disposing of them; since in that situation no man in his senses would purchase a thing to day of one, which another might take from him

to morrow. That the loss in the prizes was not the only injury; for this interference of one, in another's department, had occasioned a spirit of confusion and disorder in every branch of the public business at Nantes, and the neighboring sea ports. At the same time I reminded those gentlemen of my having been at Paris, waiting under their advice, at the very time that this appointment was given to Mr. Williams, which they had conceal'd from me; which surpriz'd me greatly; but that I was still more surpriz'd at the joint letter of Mr. Morris and myself on the subject not having been answer'd. However, as I did not know of any urgent reason for my immediate departure for Vienna and Berlin, and as I was always anxious to do everything in my power for the interest or advantage of my country, I was willing to return to Nantes, and endeavor to reform and regulate for the future the Commercial Business of Congress, before I went to Germany; provided they wou'd immediately recall the orders given to Mr. Williams, which had been complained of; and give me all the assistance which their influence as Commissioners enabled them to do; not only to correct my colleague, but to obtain a settlement of the public accounts from those persons, who had been before entrusted with the public property; and that I was very certain, if they wou'd do this, the public business might be put in a regular and orderly

train; when it wou'd be very easy to obtain credit for Congress to a very considerable amount.

To this Dr. Franklin principally reply'd. He said, that for his part he wou'd not interfere in any manner with respect to my colleague Mr. Morris, altho' he was fully sensible of his misconduct, for they had already written to Congress about it; for which he had got a *rap over the knuckles* from Mr. Morris's Brother, Robert Morris, Esq<sup>r</sup>, Chairman of the Secret Committee, who had used very disrespectful language relative to him, in a letter he had written to Mr. Deane; but the orders given to Mr. Williams about the prizes shou'd be immediately recal'd; and that an answer had been written to the joint letter from Mr. Morris and myself, *but something had intervened which had prevented its being sent*. This was all the excuse he made for not answering the joint letter; nor did he make any excuse for not answering my own letters. Mr. Deane propos'd the absolute suspension of Mr. Morris, which the other two Commissioners did not think they had any right, or authority to do. After this Conference, I waited about a fortnight (which time was employ'd in getting Mrs. Lee and my family from England) expecting to receive from Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane the revocation of the orders before given to Mr. Williams; but not receiving it, and understanding by report, that the subject of the conference had given great offence to

those Gentlemen, I gave over all thoughts of taking any further active part in the Commercial business, and apply'd my attention to that of a Commissioner at the Courts of Vienna and Berlin.

I therefore apply'd in person to Dr. Franklin for a Copy of the Treaty, that had been propos'd by Congress to the Court of Versailles, conformable to the Instructions I had receiv'd with my Commission. This he promis'd I shou'd have in a few days ; but, waiting a considerable time and not receiving it, I thought proper to write the following letter, which was deliver'd to Dr. Franklin, at Passy :

HONORABLE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, SILAS DEANE AND ARTHUR LEE, ESQRS, COMMISSIONERS FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE COURT OF VERSAILLES.

CHAILLOT, 10 November, 1777.

*Gentlemen:*

In consequence of the Instructions to me from the Honorable Congress of the United States of America, I am to request that you will be pleas'd to furnish me with a Copy of the Treaty originally propos'd by Congress to be enter'd into with France; together with the subsequent alterations which have been propos'd on either side. As my instructions came inclos'd to you for perusal and delivery, you cannot be strangers to their Contents; therefore shall be particularly oblig'd by your giving me any information that you think will tend to forward the wishes of Congress, in appointing me their Commissioner to the Courts of Vienna and

Berlin; especially, that you wou'd advise which of those Courts it wou'd be most proper for me to visit first. You having told me that Congress has omitted to direct what fund is to supply my expences and appointment, I have only to request on that head, that you will be so good as to take notice of that omission in your next despatches. I am, &c.

To this letter no written answer was ever given: but some days afterwards meeting Dr. Franklin in Company, he told me that I shou'd have a copy of the Treaty as soon as it cou'd be got ready; however, this Copy I did not receive until the 12th of January, 1778. In the meantime I was employ'd in negotiating the public business by Correspondence with the Prussian Minister at Berlin, the substance of which has been communicated to Congress in Letters, which have been receiv'd. It is to be observ'd, that the advice of General Burgoyne's Captivity, with that of his Army, did not arrive at Paris till the 4th of December, 1777; so that the preceding letter, and the Conference before mention'd with all the Commissioners in October, &c., is a full answer to Mr. Deane's charge against me of remaining inactive in Paris during the months of October and November. If there was anything criminal in my staying in Paris for those two months, 'tis evident that the Commissioners are culpable, and not me. ✓

I hope to be excused for observing here, that in

August and September we had advice of General Burgoyne's taking of Ticonderoga, and being at Fort Edward ; which in the minds of most people look'd ominous against America, and certainly influenc'd the conduct of the French Ministry in putting Mr. Hodge, a Gentleman from Philadelphia, into the Bastile ; tho', perhaps, on enquiry into this business, the principal blamie will be found to ly on Mr. Deane. Notwithstanding these unfavorable appearances, I left Nantes the beginning of October, in a few days after receiving advice of my appointment as a Commissioner, and was as active, during the months of October and November, as I was permitted to be, by the Commissioners at Paris ; altho' during that period, we had from time to time accounts of General Howe's landing at the head of Chesapeak-Bay, the battle of Brandywine, and his getting possession of Philadelphia : all which when fairly consider'd, proves in the clearest light, the injustice and malignity of the insinuation, that my conduct in the service of my Country, was directed by Events and not by principle.

Having received a copy of the Treaty the 12th of January, 1778, I requested a conference with the Commissioners at the Court of Versailles, to settle with them the articles that might be proper for me to propose to the Courts of Vienna and Berlin; this Conference I obtain'd on the 16th of January; and

as the treaties with France were then settled, and only waited for copying to be sign'd, I thought it adviseable not to leave Paris before that ceremony was over; of which I have repeatedly advis'd Congress. It must be observ'd that during the whole time of my being in Paris, no letters, nor anything relative to the commercial business of Congress, was communicated to me by Mr. Deane, (tho' he continually carry'd on a considerable correspondence on that subject) until the first of February, 1778, while I was waiting only for the signing of the Treaties with France, in order to depart for Germany, which Mr. Deane knew perfectly well; but on his receiving a letter from Nantes, from Mr. John Ross, advising him of the dangerous state of Mr. Thomas Morris, he immediately sent it to Mr. Arthur Lee, desiring him to communicate it to me; and on the 3d of February, receiving a letter of advice of Mr. Morris's Death, he sent it to Dr. Franklin, desiring him to communicate it to me also; which was done. As Mr. Deane was well inform'd that I had for some time given over all thoughts of being further concern'd with the commercial business, and that this resolution had taken place for the reasons before mention'd, and because he had assum'd almost entirely to himself the direction of that department (which I can prove by letters to him and from him) I was surpriz'd at this repeated application, and must confess, that

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my own Judgment directed me not to meddle with the business in any manner. For knowing the characters that were then acting in the direction and management of the Commercial business of Congress, I foresaw the Consequences that did happen, and that it wou'd be impossible for me in the then situation of persons and things, to render the public any very essential services.

However, submitting my own opinion to the judgment of others, I undertook to postpone my journey to Germany, and go to Nantes in order to try to put the Commercial business under some tolerable arrangement before I left France. The whole of my proceedings on this occasion have been communicated to the Secret Committee, which they, or at least their Chairman, have been in possession of many months; and also of the Copies of the letters, that pass'd between me and Mr. John Ross and others on the occasion: therefore it is unnecessary to repeat them here, as full information may be had by referring to those letters now in possession of the Secret Committee; but I think it will appear evidently, from Mr. Deane's before-mention'd publication, that this latent design, in having communicated to me the death of Mr. Morris, was to treasure up a charge of negligence against me, if I did not undertake the business, and if I did, knowing from Mr. Ross's first letter of advice that he expected to be

put into possession of all the papers of Mr. Morris, and intended to take upon himself the management of the public concerns, which I cou'd not agree to; it was more than probable, that a difference wou'd arise between me and Mr. Ross, who being patroniz'd by Robert Morris, Esq<sup>r</sup>, wou'd find support, and aid Mr. Deane in the Schemes, 'tis now prov'd he had long plan'd and been executing to injure me.

I come now to the last, and most positive charge which Mr. Deane makes against me in his Address to the Public; viz<sup>t</sup> —that before I departed from Paris, I had appointed sundry Commercial Agents at the several ports, and in one Instance remov'd the person, (viz<sup>t</sup> Mr. Williams before mention'd) who had faithfully done the public business for 2 per cent., in favor of another, who is to receive 5 per cent., of which, as well as the like Commission at other places, I receive a share.

To this bold and untrue assertion, the following facts will fully answer. It is proper to observe here that the promise which Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane gave early in October, 1777, as before mention'd, of recalling the orders to Mr. Williams which Mr. Morris and myself had complain'd of, was not comply'd with; at least it was not the 16th of December, 1777, because Mr. Williams expressly says so, in a letter from him of that date, address'd to the Hon<sup>b</sup>le American Commissioners at Paris;

and Dr. Franklin, so far from recalling those orders, as he had promis'd, writes thus to Mr. Williams:

PASSY, 22 December, 1777.

*Dear Nephew:*

You need, however, to be under no concern as to your orders being only from Mr. Deane. As you have always acted uprightly and ably for the public service, you wou'd be justifyd if you had no orders at all. But as he generally consulted with me, and had my approbation in the orders he gave, and I know they were for the best and aim'd the public good, I hereby certify you that I approve and join in those you receiv'd from him, and desire you to proceed in the execution of the same. I am ever your affectionate uncle

(Sign'd) B. FRANKLIN.

After the business about the late Mr. Morris's papers had been settled, by leaving them all seal'd up in the possession of Dr. Franklin, I wrote the following letter, which was deliver'd to Dr. Franklin at Passy:

CHAILLOT, 6 March, 1778.

*Gentlemen:*

In conformity to the general instructions of the Secret Committee that you shou'd be consulted and advis'd with in all important cases relative to their Commercial affairs, and Mr. Thomas Morris, joint Commercial Agent with me, being now dead, and as I am just on the point of setting out for Germany; I think it expedient to advise you, that in order to pre-

vent the business of the Secret Committee from getting into improper hands, I intend to appoint persons in the different ports of France to take care of any remittances, vessels, or cargoes that may arrive on account of the Secret Committee, until their farther pleasure is known. For this purpose I think of appointing Mess<sup>r</sup>s Lloyd and Jonathan Williams for the port of Nantes, and the other ports of Brittany; Messrs. S. and J. H. Delap at Bordeaux; Mr. Andrew Limozin at Havre, the two last Houses being strongly recommended by the Committee; and Mr. John Bondfield for the ports of Rochelle, Rochefort, and Bayonne. These three ports I put under the same direction, because it is not probable that many vessels will arrive at them, and the accidental ones that do arrive there, will not be more than Mr. Bondfield can easily manage. I shall be happy to find that this arrangement meets your approbation: but if it does not, be pleas'd to point out any alteration you wish to have made; and due attention shall be paid to it.

I have the honor to be, &c.

Signed,                   W. LEE.

*Hon. Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane and Arthur Lee,  
Esq<sup>r</sup>s Commissioners from the United States of America in France.*

I thought it a lucky circumstance for the public, that such a Gentleman as Mr. Lloyd was in France, to undertake the Committee's business; a merchant of respectable character, who had early in the present war quitted England with his family,

to settle at Nantes, and carry on a Commerce to his own Country, South Carolina, in which State he holds considerable property. Consequently I propos'd to him to undertake the business, which he positively declin'd; unless it cou'd be done with the full approbation and countenance of the American Commissioners at Paris; in which case he wou'd readily undertake it; and he suppos'd the most likely way to obtain that approbation and countenance wou'd be to join Mr. Jonathan Williams in the appointment with him; who being an active young man, might be of considerable assistance to him: as his uncle, Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Deane, had already employ'd him in laying out a great deal of the public money, he imagin'd their favor and protection wou'd be continued to him; and therefore without his being join'd in the appointment, it was probable the same distractions and divisions wou'd be continued in the public business, which had already prevail'd to the very great detriment of America; and in that case, he cou'd not agree to be in any manner concern'd. I mention'd therefore to Mr. Williams, that I had a design of appointing him in conjunction with Mr. Lloyd, Commercial Agent at Nantes; to which he reply'd that he shou'd be intirely directed by the advice of Doctor Franklin. Things were thus situated when I wrote the foregoing letter to the Commissioners: to which Dr. Franklin deliver'd me

his answer himself at Chaillot the 10th of March, 1778, in the afternoon, in a letter dated thus:

PASSY, 6 March, 1778.

Your proposition about appointing agents in the ports shall be laid before the Commissioners when they meet. In the meantime I can only say, that as to my Nephew Mr. Williams, tho' I have, from long knowledge and experience of him, a high opinion of his abilities, activity and integrity, I will have no hand in his appointment, or in approving of it; not being desirous of his being any way concern'd in that business. And the other gentlemen I know so little of, that I can have no objection to them, but I do not see that I have anything to do with their appointment.\*

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\* Franklin complained that Lee's agents and the captains of vessels were continually writing to him on matters of which he was ignorant. "I see clearly that many of the captains are exorbitant in their demands, and in some cases I think those demands are too easily complied with by the agents, perhaps because the commissions are in proportion to the expense. . . . The commissions demanded by the agents seem to me in some cases very high. For instance, Mr. Schweighauser, in a late account, charges five per cent. on the simple delivery of the tobacco to the officer of the farmers-general in the port, and by that means makes the commission on the delivery of the two last cargoes amount to about six hundred and thirty pounds sterling. As there was no sale in the case, he has, in order to calculate the commission, valued the tobacco at ninety livres the hundred weight; whereas it was by our contract with the farmers, to be delivered at about forty livres. I got a friend, who was going upon change, to inquire among the merchants what was the custom in such cases of delivery. . . . In conse-

It is to be observed that Passy is about half a mile distant from Chaillot. I must confess that I never cou'd see the propriety of this refusal of Dr. Franklin to agree to the appointment of his nephew, Mr. Williams, and his *apparent* delicacy on the subject; as I knew he had employ'd, and was then employing him in the commercial business of the public to the amount of above a Million; as will appear by Mr. Williams' accounts, and Dr. Franklin's letter to him before mentioned, of the 22d of December, 1777; and had by one single order given him authority to draw on the public Banker for half a million of money.

Mr. Deane gave me his answer as follows:

PASSY, 11 March, 1778.

Sir:

I can have no objection to the Persons you propose appointing to act under you in the Commercial Agency, nor can I take any active part in that affair.

Thus disappointed in the plan of having Messrs. Lloyd and Williams appointed Commercial Agents at Nantes, with the approbation and countenance of the American Commissioners, I had no other

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quence, I refused to pay the commission of five per cent. on this article; and I know not why it was, as was said, agreed with him at the time of his appointment, that he should have five per cent. on his transactions, if the custom is only two per cent., as by my information." *Franklin to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, 26 May, 1779.* The charge was abated to two per cent.

resource than to refer to the recommendation of the Secret Committee, and that was, to Mr. J. D. Schweighauser, who (among all the Cabals at Nantes, and the number of wicked insinuations and private slander of almost every Person in any manner concern'd there with American affairs) has maintain'd a clear and unsullied reputation, and was highly esteem'd by all the Americans who were, or had been at Nantes.

I shall proceed then, to give Copies of my Letters of appointment to the several Agents, asserting here what I have already made oath to, that I did not in any manner whatever, demand of either of the said Agents to receive a part or share of the Commissions that they might get, in consequence ✓ of my appointment, and that I have not received, nor do I expect ever to receive, directly or indirectly, any Commission, gratuity, or reward whatsoever from those Agents on account of that appointment. And I will further assert, that what Mr. Deane charges (untruely) to me as a crime, was actually done by Mr. Williams, Dr. Franklin's nephew, whom he speaks of in the highest terms of commendation. I can prove by Mr. Williams's own letter that he agreed with Mr. Thomas Morris to do the public business and charge 5 per cent., which they were to share between them, and Mr. Williams's accounts since render'd to the American Commissioners at Paris, will shew that he has

actually charg'd and received 5 per cent. Commission on that business.

TO MR. ANDREW LIMOZIN, AT HAVRE DE GRACE.

PARIS, 21 March, 1778.

*Dear Sir:*

I duly receiv'd your esteem'd favor of the 13th instant, and note the contents. By the death of Mr. Thomas Morris, the Commercial Agency for the Secret Committee of Congress has fallen on me alone; and I am happy in conformity to their recommendation, in appointing and authorizing you, as I do fully by this letter, to take up and dispose of such vessels and Car-goes as may be lucky enough to arrive at your port, in which the said Secret Committee may be interested, whether address'd to me solely or to Mr. Thomas Morris and myself as joint Commercial Agents; always taking care to advise the Committee of your proceedings, and giving the American Commissioners at Paris notice when any vessels arrive at your port in which the Committee are interested. I sincerely wish that you may have frequent occasions of showing your continued attachment to the interest of America in general and to that of the Secret Committee in particular. I am, &c.

(Signed) W. LEE.

TO MR. JOHN DANIEL SCWHEIGHAUSER, NANTES.

PARIS, 21 March, 1778.

*Sir:*

I was duly honor'd with your esteemed favor of the 11<sup>th</sup> current and note the contents.

As the superintendence of the Commercial Concerns

of the Secret Committee of Congress has devolv'd on me solely by the death of the late Mr. Thomas Morris, I am happy in pursuing their recommendation by appointing you to take up, and dispose of any vessels or Cargoes that may arrive in the port of Nantes or any other port in Brittany, on account of said Committee; requesting you always to govern yourself in this Agency conformable to such Instructions, or advice as you may receive with such vessels or Cargoes; whether they are address'd to me solely, or to Mr. Morris and myself as joint Commercial Agents; and that you may be fully inform'd on that head, you are hereby authorized to open any letters that may come to your hands, directed to me only as Commercial Agent, or to Mr. Morris and myself as joint Agents for America. In order to prevent as much as possible any interference with you, or any interruption in this business, I enclose you a certificate, and a letter from the Chairman of the Committee, dated February the 3<sup>d</sup> 1777, to shew my authority, if any one shou'd entertain a doubt about it.

You will please to give the Committee regular advice of your proceedings, and also give the American Commissioners at Paris advice whenever any property arrives in which the Committee is interested. Shou'd any cargoes arrive in the above mention'd ports address'd to me, being private property, you will please to dispose of the same in the best manner you can for the interest of the concern'd, and follow their directions in making returns for the same. Be so good as to forward any letters that may come to your hands, directed for me, to Mr. Grand, Banquier in Paris.

I have no doubt of your conduct in this agency giving entire satisfaction to all parties concern'd, and wishing you success therein,

I have the honor, &c,

(Signed) W. LER.

MR. JOHN BONDFIELD, BORDEAUX.

PARIS, 21 March, 1778.

Sir:

As the Commercial Agency for the Secret Committee of Congress has devolved solely on me by the Death of Mr. T<sup>r</sup> Morris, and having a good opinion of your abilities, industry and integrity, I am induced to request you will take upon yourself the management of any vessels, and the disposal of such Cargoes, as may arrive in the Ports of Bordeaux, Bayonne, Rochelle and Rochfort, belonging to said Committee, in which they are interested or concern'd; hereby authorizing and empowering you to act in all such Cases as fully as I cou'd do, if personally present; always wishing you to attend closely to such Instructions or advice as you may receive with said vessels or Cargoes, whether address'd to me solely or to Mr. Morris and myself jointly. And that you may be fully inform'd, you are farther authoriz'd to open any letters that come to your hands directed to me solely as Commercial Agent, or to Mr. Morris and myself as joint Agents. The House of Mess<sup>rs</sup> S. & J. H. Delap formerly did business for the Secret Committee, but the enclos'd letter (which you will please to deliver) will shew the reason of the alteration, and to facilitate your operations for the benefit of the concern'd, I have thought it advisable to

inclose you a certificate; also a letter from the Chairman of the Secret Committee, Robert Morris, Esq<sup>r</sup>, which will fully shew my authority, and consequently that under which you are to act. I wish you to give the Committee the earliest advice of this arrangement, and on all future occasions that you wou'd advise them of your proceedings. It will be proper to inform the American Commissioners at Paris, when any property arrives in which the Secret Committee is interested. I have not the least doubt of your giving entire satisfaction in whatever is committed to your care, and wishing you both ease and success in the management.

I am, &c.,

(Sign'd) W. LEE.

The Secret Committee were informed by letter from me dated March 23d, 1778 (which they have receiv'd) of these arrangements being made, only until they shou'd give further orders therein; also of the reason why the House of Messrs. S. & J. H. Delap was omitted at Bordeaux; tho' I had acted upon my own judgment alone, there was another much more forcible reason with me for such omission; which being mention'd to Dr. Franklin, on my first coming to France, and he to Mr. Deane, the latter, I understood, had prevail'd on the former, to think that my Information was not well founded; (the private connections between Mr. Deane and that house were too publickly known to require mentioning by me;) therefore I submitted; and that house seem'd to grow afterwards into

higher favor with those Gentlemen, than it had been before. I had never the most distant private connection or correspondence with this house, nor the honor of being acquainted with any one of the partners: therefore my conduct cou'd not possibly arise from personal motives. However, to avoid all misconception 'tis proper to add a Copy of my letter to that House, which was enclos'd to Mr. Bondfield.

MESSRS. S. & J. H. DELAP, BORDEAUX.

*Gentlemen:*

I wrote you from Nantes the 14<sup>th</sup> ult<sup>o</sup> advising you that by the Death of Mr. Thomas Morris the Commercial Agency for the Secret Committee of Congress had fallen on me alone, and desiring you wou'd favor me with your account current against said Committee, with account sales of such goods as you had receiv'd on their account: To this letter you have not been pleas'd to favor me with any answer, therefore conclude you do not chuse to act any farther for said Committee; consequently by virtue of the powers vested in me by said Committee, I have authorized Mr. John Bondfield, who will deliver this, to take up, and dispose of such Cargoes or Vessels as may arrive at Bordeaux on account of said Committee, or that may be address'd to me solely, or to Mr. Morris and myself as joint Commercial agents. This I think it proper to give you due notice of, not doubting that you will act in conformity.

I am, &c.,

(Sign'd) W. LEE.

I have now given a plain and unvarnish'd account of all my conduct in the Public Service, relative to their Commercial Affairs, the Truth of which I am ready to verify on oath; besides being possess'd of the original writings and testimonials, that prove the most material parts: which shall at all times be open to the perusal of proper persons; yet still I think it expedient to mention that Congress did on the 9th of February, 1778, before the date of the above mention'd appointments, resolve, that the Committee of Commerce shou'd write to the Commissioners at the Court of France, desiring them to appoint commercial agents; the Commercial Committee did write to the Commissioners accordingly on the same day, which letter was received in France, some time in May or June; since which time I have not had any concern with that department; if there had been any sufficient ground for altering the appointments I had made, there can be no doubt but that they wou'd have done it long since. In September, 1778, I heard that the same dark agents, who had long been employ'd in traducing every person that had been employ'd in the affairs of America, unless he was of their society, commenc'd an attack on the character of Mr. Schweighauser, and his son-in-law, Mr. Dobrée, which began by dropping anonymous and undirected letters on the tables of the Commissioners, full of charges and insinuations against these

Gentlemen; at length one of these Letter droppers, being discovered, was called upon for the Author, which he refused to give up; however the charges I have understood, have been enquired into, and I suppose the issue of that enquiry has been communicated to Congress by the Commissioners; but I must beg leave to add heré extracts of a letter to me from John Lloyd, Esq<sup>r</sup>, and of a certificate sent to the American Commissioners at Paris on this subject by Daniel Blake and John Lloyd, Esq<sup>r</sup>s, of South Carolina; where they both have considerable Estates, and are well known to be gentlemen of the highest Integrity, honor and good sense.

NANTES, 19 September, 1778.

The unjust, base and villainous attack made upon Mr. Dobrée and Mr. Schweighauser must have originated in hearts capable of the blackest crimes; and those who countenance such assassin-like proceedings, are not in my opinion less culpable.

(Signed) JOHN LLOYD.

NANTES, 19 September, 1778.

Being informed that some malicious person or persons, hath been, and are still endeavoring, by the most infamous means, to deprive Mr. J. D. Schweighauser of his good name, and being apprehensive that the intention is to prejudice him in the estimation of the Honorable Commissioners; we think it an act of justice due to injur'd merit to acquaint you, that we have employ'd, and are now employing that Gentleman to

transact for our friends and ourselves to a very large amount. The satisfaction that they and we have received from his assiduity, honor and integrity, will induce us to pursue every means in our power, after our arrival in America, to serve him; being confident that as a merchant he most justly deserves public and private confidence. He has had, and continues to transact, a very considerable part of the business to and from America; and we have always heard the Americans, who have had any connection with him, speak of him in the most respectful terms.

(Signed) DAN<sup>T</sup>. BLAKE,  
JOHN LLOYD.

These certificates, given six months after my appointment of Mr. Schweighauser as one of the Commercial agents, by gentlemen who were on the spot to see and judge for themselves, are surely a full vindication of my choice, had I not been authorized to make it by the Committee's recommendation, which was strengthened by my own observation and Judgment.

Nowadays it seems to be the mode to circulate dark and wicked insinuations, by whispering in corners, and by anonymous Letters, and when the plot is sufficiently ripe, the insinuations are converted into *stubborn and undeniable facts*, and the anonymous Letters into proof as clear as that of holy writ: But whether these charges and insinuations against Mr. Schweighauser or his son-in-law, be true or false, let the accus'd answer for them-

selves : but I will observe that the accusations, and even the subject of them, are of a date long after my appointment of Mr. Schweighauser, and long after the Commercial Agency was taken out of my hands by Congress. Indeed I have been informed that the direct attempts to blacken the character of Mr. Schweighauser, who was the only agent appointed by me at Nantes, were soon given up, as it was found to be rather too arduous an undertaking ; but the indirect attempts were continued, thro' the medium of his relations with his son-in-law. These relations being charged by hearsay, with enmity to America, it was infer'd that Mr. Dobrée was guilty, and as surely his father-in-law, Mr. Schweighauser, must be guilty also. 'Tis very certain that there is something very curious in this mode of accusation ; but I wonder these accusers do not recollect the case of Dr. Franklin (whom they and Mr. Deane extol to the skies, and who is absolutely trusted by Congress), and his only son, Governor Franklin, whose former and present conduct is too notorious in America and even in Europe to need mentioning here.

It is now made evident that every positive charge which Mr. Deane has brought against me, is not only unfounded, but directly the reverse of truth ; and it is somewhat curious that the only thing which he mentions as being *doubtful*, happens to be a truth: this is, that I *might* be an alderman of

London at the time he was writing his letter. The fact is, I was then an Alderman of London, and, as far as I know, am one at this moment.

As soon as I got my family from England, I wrote to one of my Common Council, saying that I was ready to resign my Gown, as soon as my constituents were ready to receive it. The answer was, that the majority did not wish me to resign it. I wrote several times to the same purpose, and receiv'd the same answers: when at length I determined to wait no longer, and on the 13th of November I sent my resignation in form, but this not getting to hand until the 22<sup>d</sup> or 23<sup>d</sup> occasioнд the proceedings at the Wardmote, the 21st December (last St. Thomas's day) which having been publish'd in almost all the London papers, it is unnecessary for me to repeat here. Although my constituents have been actually in possession of my resignation ever since December last, they have not yet thought proper to make use of it, because they say, they wish to find a successor to fill my place of sound old whig principles; for which, it is certain, they honor'd me with their Choice. One of the Common Council in last month (viz<sup>t</sup> Feb. 1779), wrote to me thus: "It is certainly the wish of my brethren and self that the resignation shou'd not be made until we request it, i. e., supposing you are no ways injur'd by this." The injury must be very great indeed, that will induce me to

be guilty of ingratitude to men, who have not only honor'd me by their choice, on the noblest principles of liberty, but have even shown themselves warmly attach'd to the Cause of America. I speak of a great majority of my Constituents; for which reason I think it a duty incumbent on me to let them proceed in their own business as they judge right; and in this I am confident, that every honorable and impartial man will accord with me.

I have the honor to be,  
with the greatest respect,  
your Excellency's most obedient  
and very humble serv<sup>t</sup>

W. LEE.

*Frankfort on the Mayn in Germany, March 8th, 1779.*

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HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT JAY AT CONGRESS.

PARIS, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1779.

I have just had communicated to me the copies of two letters from Mr. Silas Deane, address'd to Mr. President Laurens, dated Philadelphia, October 12<sup>th</sup> 1778, and a separate paper relative to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> articles in the Treaty of Commerce, between his most Christian Majesty and the United States of America; in which letter, so far as respects me personally, he has asserted nearly the same groundless charges as in his letter to the public, which have been already so fully reply'd to, and

prov'd to be utterly repugnant to truth. Had Mr. Deane made these very extraordinary assertions only once, he might have had some shadow of excuse, tho' it is a very bad one, by pleading a weak memory; but a deliberate repetition of them, after an interval of time amply sufficient for recollection, shews a heart and designs of such a complexion, that all good men shou'd avoid and guard against. Mr. Deane concludes with the following assertions by way of summary of all he had before advanced:

1<sup>st</sup>. That I never had a Commission to the Commercial Agency. What Mr. Deane may stile *a commission*, I do not know; but he knew by a letter to himself from Mr. John Ross in July, 1777, of which he knows I have a copy, that I had as sufficient authority to act in the Commercial Agency as Mr. Thomas Morris, and that I did act in that department accordingly. But if Mr. Deane knew I was not Commercial Agent, how can he palliate so bold and daring an imposition on his most Christian Majesty and his Ministers, as to represent me in that character to them; which he did do in the letter sign'd by him to his Excellency Count de Vergennes, in February, 1778, representing that the late Mr. Thomas Morris's papers might be put in my possession, as then being the sole Commercial Agent of Congress. But indeed we ought not to be surpriz'd at any imposition whatever on the part of Mr. Deane, when he impos'd himself on the

King of France, his ministers, and the whole world as a Commissioner of Congress on the 20<sup>th</sup> of March, 1778, when he confesses that on the 4<sup>th</sup> of that month he received a resolution of Congress recalling him to America. I also refer for his conviction to the Letters and proceedings of the Secret Committee.

2dly. Mr. Deane says: "Mr. Lee's caution was such, that he never even answer'd my letters to him in February or March, informing him that Mr. Robert Morris had written to me, that he was appointed; nor did I hear anything from him of his intentions until he arriv'd at Paris the summer following, where also he acted with the greatest caution, while he waited the return of his brother from Berlin." One cannot here omit observing the studied latitude of expression. Mr. Deane talks of his letter in *February or March*, and that I came to Paris in the *summer* following. Will Mr. Deane say how many letters he wrote? I never saw or heard of but *one*. Will he please to say whether that one letter was dated the 1<sup>st</sup> of February or the 31<sup>st</sup> of March? for the difference of *two* whole months makes a very material alteration in the consequence he means to draw from the assertion. I will answer, that his only letter is dated the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, tho' he acknowledges his having receiv'd a *notification* from Mr. Robert Morris in February of my appointment; and at

the same time was desir'd to give me information *immediately* of it. It has been also prov'd by Mr. Deane's letter to Mr. Williams on the same day, viz<sup>t</sup> March 30<sup>th</sup>, that he was plotting a contention and rivalship in this Department long before it was possible for him to know my determination on the subject. Again, will Mr. Deane specify what time in the *summer* I arriv'd at Paris? because here it is left to be understood, either the first day of June or the last day of August; which makes a still greater difference than the former expression. I will assert, what I can prove, that I arriv'd in Paris the 11<sup>th</sup> of June; and that besides receiving a letter from me himself in the month of *May*, he was personally told by my Brother, Arthur Lee, by my desire, in the beginning of May, that I wou'd come over as soon as possible to execute my appointment; and so far from waiting in Paris for my Brother's return from Berlin, it has been prov'd already, that I waited by the express advice of Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane until the 31st. of July, 1777, as their letter to me of that date will shew; which was nine days after my Brother's return from Berlin to Paris.

The manner in which Mr. Deane sent me the letter informing me of my appointment, join'd with what is now manifest, a form'd design in him and Dr. Franklin to make Mr. Williams (nephew of the latter, and who now appears connected with

the former in private mercantile business) commercial agent in opposition to the Secret Committee's appointment, renders it evident that he expected either the interception of that letter, or of my answer, wou'd have subjected me to imprisonment and secur'd their plan. It is this disappointment that makes Mr. Deane so outragious against me, for not having committed so great an act of Imprudence, situated as I was, as to be writing to him by the post upon such a subject. That this scheme of Mr. Deane might be more effectual, notice of my appointment was circulated upon the Royal Exchange in London, before I receiv'd Mr. Deane's letter; and not long after, it was publish'd in the newspapers in authentic letters written from Paris. Now, as Mr. Deane acknowledges that *he* receiv'd the letter announcing my appointment, it must have by *him* that others were enabled to write and publish it to all the world; while my *Life, Liberty, and property*, were at stake. It is hardly in charity to believe, that these were not the intended victims of Mr. Deane's conduct.

gely. He charges it as a crimes, that I was circumspect in my conduct, on my first coming to France, for fear of prejudicing my interest in London.

Will any man in the world call circumspection a crime, where ostentation wou'd have been not only useless, but highly ridiculous, and when my

family, and nearly the whole of my property in Europe, were in the power of the enemy?

I have in the former part of this narrative shewn, that my urgent desire of serving my country, and its glorious cause, had induc'd me to quit England so hastily, as to leave behind me Mrs. Lee not recover'd from her lying in (which event was daily expected when Mr. Deane's letter was receiv'd) my children, House, Furniture, and property to the amount of many thousand pounds sterling; the greater part of which has been withheld from me, in consequence of my coming away. It is somewhat curious to observe that almost in the same breath, Mr. Deane brings a heavy charge against Mr. Arthur Lee for being ostentatious in his proceedings, and as heavy a one against me for conducting mine with caution: but this is among the least of his inconsistencies and contradictions of himself.

4thly. Mr. Deane says: "So far was he (meaning me) from ever executing or publickly attempting to execute that Agency until after the news of General Burgoyne's defeat had arriv'd in France, that he did nothing that ever I heard of, which cou'd have prevented his returning to the exercise of his Aldermanship of London."

If anything could astonish me that comes from Mr. Deane, surely here is abundant matter for astonishment. He had just before, from under his

own hand, on the very same paper, acknowledg'd my having attempted to exercise that appointment, in the joint letter from Mr. Thomas Morris, and myself as Commercial agents, to himself and Dr. Franklin in August, 1777, which he calls *severe*; but which I aver, is a very civil one, and that it does not contain a single harsh or offensive expression. He acknowledges also the conference I had with all the Commissioners in France, in October, on the subject of the Commercial business, when Mr. Izard was present. He knew also that I had receiv'd a cargo publicly at Nantes, belonging to Congress, by the Abigail, Cap<sup>t</sup> Jenne; which vessel was loaded again by me, and despatched back for America in three weeks; while other American vessels of no greater size, or importance, were detain'd at Nantes from two or three months. He knew also, or ought to have known, that I had written a letter address'd to all the commissioners, Dr. Franklin, Mr. Deane, and Mr. Arthur Lee, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November, 1777, which was deliver'd to Dr. Franklin as eldest commissioner the same day; wherein I requested a copy of the Treaties that had been proposed to the Courts of France and Spain, agreeable to my Instructions from Congress, that I might not as a Commissioner of Congress, propose any thing repugnant thereto, to the Courts of Vienna and Berlin. After these things, and a continued series of operations in the public service

(all of which Mr. Deane was acquainted with) from the time I was permitted to act by himself and Dr. Franklin until the 4th of December, when the news of General Burgoyne's defeat arriv'd at Paris: with what face cou'd Mr. Deane make such an assertion as he has done? Most of these things also, being of public notoriety, and capable of being prov'd by a multitude of witnesses; can any one suppose Mr. Deane so totally ignorant of the Laws of England, as to imagine he cou'd think I might return "to the exercise of my aldermanship of London," without being a madman desirous of hanging himself.

This Gentleman attempts to excuse himself and Dr. Franklin for not answering the joint letter of Mr. Morris and myself, by laying the blame on Mr. Arthur Lee; not a syllable of which was mention'd at the conference I had in October, 1777, at Passy, with all the Commissioners, when Mr. Izard was present; and which Mr. Lee has answer'd himself; but he omits to say why my several letters from Nantes, as Commercial Agent, on public business, to the Commissioners, were not answer'd, and of which I not only complained at the Conference, but since. In order to invalidate what Mr. Izard has written, he totally misstates the purport of the Letter, which Mr. Izard complains of Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane's refusing to write. This letter, as desir'd by me, was a general one to

all Captains and others, informing them that I was a Commercial Agent of the Secret Committee of Congress, and that in consequence they ought to follow my directions and orders, in all matters relating to the Commercial business of the Committee.

So far from my proposing the suspension of Mr. Morris, I never thought the Commissioners had the least shadow of authority to do it. 'Tis certain that Mr. Deane not only propos'd the suspension of Mr. Morris at this Conference, but at several other times. As a confirmation of this assertion I beg leave to give the following extract from Mr. Deane's letter to me, dated

PASSY, 18 December, 1777.

My advice before your appointment (as was well known) was to supercede Mr. Morris, and appoint another, until the pleasure of Congress shou'd be known. I was always of the same opinion after your appointment, that you ought to conduct the business alone; these are well known to have been my uniform sentiments.

With regard to the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Articles of the Treaty of Commerce, 'tis certain that I did not speak to Mr. Deane about them; because his conduct has been such, on almost every occasion, that I had determin'd never to speak to him singly on any public business whatever; but I spoke to Dr. Franklin largely on the subject, and surely Mr.

Deane cannot forget that when a proposition was made to him and Dr. Franklin, by desire of Mr. Izard and myself, that we might have a conference with them on those articles, they rejected the proposition with contempt and with insulting terms.

Mr. Deane labors much to throw an odium on me, as wishing to monopolize to myself the places both of honor and profit. Probably from the weakness of his memory, he forgot that in the Commencement of his address to the public he states that before September, 1776, he "had the honor to be the *Commercial* and *political* agent of America in Europe." He also forgets that the first cause of any difference between us was his usurping the exercise of the Commercial agency, to which Mr. Morris and myself were appointed by the Secret Committee, while he was not only one of the Commissioners to the Court of Versailles particularly, but generally authoriz'd to that with every power in Europe—the influence and patronage of which very extensive commission, he was perpetually endeavoring to retain entirely to himself. He also seems to be ignorant of what, I suppose, is known to most people in Philadelphia, that his "Venerable Friend," as he calls him, Dr. Franklin, is at this moment, not only *sole* Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Versailles, but also in fact, *sole* superintending Commercial Agent in all Europe.

I have the honor to be with the greatest Respect  
and consideration your Excellencies Most Obdient  
& Most Hble Serv<sup>t</sup>

W. LEE.

*His Excellency Mr. President Jay at Congress.\**

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

PARIS, 25 March, 1779.

*My dear Brother,*

The original of my last letter by M<sup>r</sup> Stockton,  
which is copied on the other side, may not perhaps  
reach you as soon as this.

M<sup>r</sup> Adams had left this place to go to Nantes to  
be ready to take his passage in the Alliance for  
America, before I got here, in which I was unlucky,  
as I much wished to have some conversation with  
him before his departure.†

With this goes a full vindication of myself  
against the aspersions of M<sup>r</sup> Silas Deane, under  
cover to his Excellency President Jay, to be laid  
before Congress.

I do not make any address to the public, because  
as far as I am acquainted with the actual situation  
of things in America, such a step would be highly  
improper, as tending to draw the attention of the

\* Endorsed. William Lee's vindication in answer to the publication Dec. 5, 1778, signed Silas Deane. Received October 11, 1779.

† Adams set out from Passy on the 8th, and reached Nantes on the 12th.

people from the reverence and respect of Congress, which is the grand basis of the security of America, and which our enemies have been, and are still trying by bribery, and every insidious to bring about; and because I fear, that if the attention of people is taken off from exerting every effort in providing for their security against our inveterate enemies, they may be taken unawares and suffer irreparable injuries. If you however being on the spot judge it proper that any public reply on my part should be made, 'twill I suppose be amply sufficient to select some of the striking facts, out of what is sent to Congress, and publish them. Such as, that M<sup>r</sup>. Williams actually agreed to do the public business for M<sup>r</sup>. Morris, and divide the 5 pr c<sup>t</sup>. between them, (I have M<sup>r</sup>. Deane's letter on this engagement, which he approved); and that M<sup>r</sup>. W. has actually charged and received this 5 p<sup>r</sup> c<sup>t</sup>.

The certificates of the agents appointed by me, viz: Mss. Limozin, Schweighauser and Bondfield, whose certificate has been already sent to Congress.

That Congress in Feb. 1778 put the commercial agency under the direction of the American commissioners at the court of France, which authority D<sup>r</sup> Franklin, as minister here, is now exercising alone, and such other facts as you may think prudent and proper to publish.

From my own letters to you, as well as my brother's to you and M<sup>r</sup>. S. Adams, you can shew

that so far from my desiring to keep the commercial Agency in my hands, while I was acting as a commissioner, as M<sup>r</sup> Deane and his partizans insinuate, we both recommended M<sup>r</sup> Lloyd to the commercial agency. And as they charge us with an engrossing disposition, will they show what part of profit any of the family has, or ever had?

M<sup>r</sup> Deane's fortune when he came over here must be well known in America. Every body knows he has now much money.

The critical situation of M<sup>r</sup> R. Morris, at the beginning of the American War, was not only generally known in London and Holland, but in other places; what is it now?

What has M<sup>r</sup> Carter Braxton, M<sup>r</sup> Williams, M<sup>r</sup> John Ross, and a multitude of other dependants of M<sup>r</sup> Deane and M<sup>r</sup> Morris? Have they made these immense profits with their own or the public funds? as to myself I shall be perfectly easy if Congress, in the arrangement of their European affairs, should leave me out entirely.

I never did ask for, nor ever wished for my present appointment; however I trust there will be justice enough to reimburse me what I have lost by coming from England, to enter on the public service, that my family may not starve while it is impossible to get any supplies from America; for I know not any part of Europe where we could get 50 guineas to keep us from a jail. I can by a fair

account prove that I lost by coming from England above £6,500 Ster<sup>k</sup>, all money out of my pocket.

If on the contrary, I should be continued a minister, 'twill be as necessary for Congress to fix some more decisive mode of supplying the expenses of the commission, than the resolution of last year, that the commissioners at the other courts should draw on those at Paris for their expenses; for in consequence thereof, I drew last Sept<sup>r</sup> on the commissioners here for 1.000 Louis d'ors, which Dr Franklin refused to accept: he also refused to accept M<sup>r</sup> Izard's draft for 500 Louis d'ors, however the other two commissioners accepted both our drafts.

Now Dr. Franklin is sole minister and sole commercial director; he told me the other day, that he would not pay any of my drafts for my expenses;—thus does he presume to contravene the appointments and orders of Congress, and he had even the assurance when I mentioned to him, the resolution about unanimity and cordiality here to reply that Congress should set us the example by their own conduct.\*

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\* "In this situation I have been applied to by Mr. William Lee, and lately, through our banker, by Mr. Izard, for more money for their expenses; and, I am told, there is much anger against me for declining to furnish them, and that I am charged with *disobeying an order of Congress*, and with cruelly attempting to distress gentlemen who are in the service of their country. They have, indeed, produced to me a resolve of Congress,

For my own part, I cannot any longer submit to the insolence and tricks of this old creature, who is perpetually surrounded by persons to whom his papers are exposed, that he has been again and again cautioned about, and whom everybody but himself take to be spies for our enemies. But they flatter his vanity, and tell him he is absolute Lord of America. This is with him a most decisive proof of their merit and integrity.

I do not know that it has been yet explicitly, and in regular manner settled between the King of France and the United States, that the guarantee on both sides mentioned in the Treaty of Alliance has now actually taken place. This is a point of so much importance that it can't be too soon or too explicitly settled. If this guarantee has actually taken place, surely Congress did not consider that

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*empowering them to draw on the Commissioners in France for their expenses at foreign courts ; and doubtless Congress, when that resolve was made, intended to enable us to pay those drafts ; but as that has not been done, and the gentlemen (except Mr. Lee for a few weeks) have not incurred any expense at foreign courts, and, if they had, the five thousand five hundred guineas, received by them in about nine months, secured an ample provision for it, and as both of them might command money from England, I do not conceive that I disobeyed an order of Congress, and that if I did, the circumstances will excuse it ; and I could have no intention to distress them, because I must know it is out of my power, as their private fortunes and credit will enable them at all times to pay their own expenses."*

*Franklin to Committee of Foreign Affairs, 26 May, 1779.*

peace must be actually made here, when they determined to leave all their political and mercantile interests in this country, in one and the same hand. I know that what is agreed here, must be ratified by Congress, to be binding; but I know as well how difficult it will be to resist even a very bad arrangement of the Pacification that is agreed to here, therefore too much care cannot be taken to prevent such an evil.

It seems to me that immediate instructions and very explicit should be sent to the minister here, not to consent or even undertake to recommend to Congress any plan of pacification without the consent and approbation of all the deputies, that Congress may have in Europe; who can be easily assembled here, on such an important occasion. Communicate this idea to the Aristides of America, S. A.\* with my very best respects, and to such others as you know love their country and liberty, better or at least as well as themselves.

I have not followed the example of M<sup>r</sup> Izard, and my brother in requesting to resign; because I do not approve what they have done; for the greater the danger, the more I am firm; and at this moment, the danger to one country seems to me more tremendous than ever, from the inveteracy of our enemies and the abandoned profligacy of those who having plundered millions of the public money

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\* Samuel Adams.

wish to realize what they have hold of, by a secret convention with our enemies to be secured, if by private machination they can bring about a subjugation or pacification on dependent principles.

I did not believe Gov<sup>r</sup> Johnstone when he boasted to the British cabinet, and his confidential friends of what great things would arise from the effects of his private operations in America; but some late proceedings, particularly the not censuring Silas Deane for his daring publication have had a bad appearance; however I am determined to stick the closer to the operations of the secret and underhand operations of the enemies of our country.

I am assured that what a certain *Great Man*\* as he is called, has done for Silas Deane and his Junto, is not entirely approved of at Versailles; and he is consequently coming away.

This to yourself.—I have surely great reason to be offended at giving up all T. Morris's papers after what had passed here; which was not very wise; for there is great reason to believe they contained something highly important for Congress to have known, from the letters of M<sup>r</sup> John Ross, who was a good deal in the secrets of Silas Deane, and R. Morris with you.

I am inclined to think the former chairman†

\* Gerard, the French minister in America.

† Robert Morris.

concealed my letters, and documents sent with them, from the secret committee, or Congress, until he obtained the resolve for the papers to be delivered up to his order. Pray tell me how this business was really managed with you.

I burn to write my mind truly to M<sup>r</sup>. Morris, on the subject, but I wish not to be hasty, because my conjecture may be ill-founded. Will not M<sup>r</sup> Deane's publication show to Congress the necessity of adopting the mode practised by every power in Europe, of administering an oath of secrecy to all their public ministers or commissioners. Those with you may do it before they come away, and those in Europe, on having the form sent them, should be obliged to take the oath before a proper officer in the country where they are, and to return at least 3 certificates to Congress of his having taken this oath.

The receipt of the following letters written by me and delivered here to M<sup>r</sup> Simeon Deane, in Feb: 1778 has never been acknowledged, viz: to yourself dated 28<sup>th</sup> Feb: 1778, conveying copies of mine to you on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of Feb: 1778 from Nantes, and copies of some of M<sup>r</sup> Ross's letters relative to M<sup>r</sup> T. Morris's papers; to R. Morris, Esq<sup>r</sup> 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1778; F. L. Lee Esq<sup>r</sup> same date; Secret Committee of same date; President of Congress, same date, viz. 28<sup>th</sup> Feb<sup>r</sup> 1778. All these were put up in one packet and directed to the

President of Congress; also a letter to Gen<sup>l</sup>. Arnold with an engraving,—the history of the Revolution in Switzerland.

Pray inquire and let me know if all, or any of these letters have been received; for I never supposed it was for much good, that M<sup>r</sup>. Silas Deane went from hence with his brother Simeon, after he had these dispatches as far as Versailles, where they staid together all night; and from whence Silas brought an impertinent letter from his brother Simeon to our brother Arthur Lee, for demanding a receipt from his brother Simeon for these letters.

It seems that no interest is to be paid in France for any money put into the Continental Loan Office after March 1778. I don't see therefore what benefit will arise to me from putting any of the annual produce of my estate into the office and for what has been put there, I wish you to send me the bill here, at least for the amount of the interest. I have already, I fear, written too much, and yet have a great deal more to say. Our best love and wishes attend you and yours, and I remain, &c.

P. S.—Your sons are well, and I suppose write to you frequently. The linnen you desired is sent in the Gov<sup>r</sup>. Livingston, Cap<sup>t</sup> Gale for Virginia, to the care of my steward, M<sup>r</sup>. Ellis.

## TO THE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

PARIS, March 25, 1779.

*Gentlemen:*

Be pleased to refer to the foregoing copy of my letter to you of the 25th ultimo by Mr. Stockton, which may not get to hand as soon as this.

On the 10th instant an armistice was published between the Emperor and King of Prussia, and the same day the conferences were opened at Teschin in Austrian Silesia, to consolidate and reduce into form the treaty of peace between the two contending Powers, the important articles of which have been already agreed upon by both parties. The operations of war have consequently ceased, but perhaps the final signature of the peace may not take place for some weeks.

The principal objects of my coming here were to engage this Court to aid and assist me in adopting the most speedy and efficacious measures to prevent our joint enemies from reaping considerable advantage from the peace in Germany, by engaging a vast number of the free corps that have been raised for this war, to the number of fifteen or twenty thousand men, that will all be disbanded as soon as the peace is signed, and to aid me in endeavoring to get the German Powers to acknowledge the independence of America, which would certainly have a decided influence on Great Britain, and induce her King and Ministers to

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what place will be or the time of inter-  
view.

As it is the regular and usual mode in Europe for one nation to treat with another on public questions through the medium of their public Ministers I applied to Dr. Franklin in my several interviews at the American Minister at this Court to go with me to the Excellency Count de Vergennes to concert with him on these points. The Doctor declined doing so, saying he was so little acquainted with German affairs that he could not meddle with them. I told him that it was not his knowledge or idea of the German politics that was to be communicated to the Minister, but mine on which the Minister would form his own judgment with respect to the propriety of my propositions but unless they were made to him in the regular mode by the Minister of Congress at this Court it could not be expected that he would pay much attention to what came from me, as an individual unauthorized by Congress to treat with him on great political subjects. The doctor still refused either to go with me, or to write by me on the subject to Count de Vergennes. I shall, however, do every thing that is in my power to accomplish those desirable ends, and from the present appearance of things, it appears to me most probable I shall succeed in one, if not both the objects in view, if I can obtain the aid and concurrence of the Ministry here.

These are certainly objects of high importance, especially with respect to the troops, as the British Ministry have now several officers in pay in Germany waiting to engage them. Our enemies it seems are determined to prosecute the war against us, at least for this year; their plan must be begun before this gets to hand, and therefore opened to you, which renders it unnecessary for me to mention anything on that subject.

With this is a letter to President Jay, covering my reply to the allegations of Mr. Silas Deane against me, in his letter to Congress of the 12th of October, to be laid before Congress, which I flatter myself will, in the mind of every impartial person, be not only a full vindication of my conduct, but also prove how little credit is due to any assertions of Mr. Deane. As to myself personally, I am perfectly at ease with respect to the weak and wicked attempts of Mr. Deane to injure me, for I am shielded with the invincible armor of innocence; but the injury his daring publication has done to the common cause of America in Europe, is not easily to be delineated, and I can assure you, with truth, that our enemies are more elated at it than they would have been with a capital victory. The reason for their exultation is too evident to require mentioning.\* Besides, it has created a diffidence

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\* "If we may credit the late accounts from America, a dawn

in the minds of the Europeans, which will embarrass extremely every attempt at public negotiations; since few Ministers will treat with a people who permit every thing that passes to be wantonly published to the world with impunity. I trust, however, the wisdom of Congress will not let its attention be drawn off from the great and principal object of providing effectually for defeating the open and secret efforts of our enemies against us, and finally to force them to an honorable peace;

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of hope has at length broken forth upon the despair of administration. Silas Deane is returned to Philadelphia from the Court of France, deeply incensed at his recall, which he attributed to the influence of the two Mr. Lees, in Congress, who in conjunction with their brothers at the Courts of Versailles and Vienna, have been endeavouring to induce that body to break their faith with the French nation, and sacrifice America to the English Ministry. In fine, the seeds of dissension are at last sown in Congress, and there is no doubt, but that every means will be used on our part, to make them vegetate and expand throughout America." *The London Packet*, 27 January, 1779.

"Great dissensions prevail at this time among the rebel Colonists. Silas Deane is openly arraigning the conduct of Congress, while the Congress condemn him as the author of confusion and distrust in every department in which he has been employed; and Gen. Arnold has been censured in a long string of allegations, setting forth the tyranny of his behavior, and the several disadvantages suffered by the state through the impropriety of his commands." *London Chronicle*, 17 April, 1779.

"The reports of disputes in the Congress are confirmed. Discontents universally reign out of it." *Letter from New York*, 27 February, in *London Chronicle*, 27 April, 1779.

which I am convinced they will not accede to until they are driven off the continent. I have the honor to be, &c.

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TO FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE.

PARIS, 26 March, 1779.

*My dear Brother:*

The inclosed copy of mine of the 20. Dec<sup>r</sup>. Ult<sup>o</sup> contains almost as much as I can say on my private affairs, except that you may deliver or not, as you think best, the inclosed Letter to Col. G. Mason, if I have time to write one. I now understand that all my property of every kind is taxed 1½ pC. in Virg<sup>a</sup>; so that what money of mine has been put into the Continental Loan Office, which has been sufficiently reduced already, will soon come to nothing at all. If I am to receive paper for money advanced in London, surely the same paper must be legal payment to my Creditors for Sterling debts, and I beg it may be tendered to them. As to the annual produce of my Estate and the interest at least of what has been already put into the Continental Loan Office, I cou'd wish it to be remitted to me in Bills on Paris, if they are to be got, which I suppose is possible, as there have been a great many drawn on the Commissioners here and some purchased at 300 pC. My object in desiring this remittance is to get something for my family to live on, since it seems more than probable that my

present public appointment either is already, or will be soon [revoked] and if it is not, unless Congress fall upon some sure mode of supplying the expenses, the Commission must cease of itself, for notwithstanding the resolve of Congress last year, Doc<sup>r</sup> Franklin has refused to supply either M<sup>r</sup> Izard or myself with any more money. 'Tis true the other two Commissioners did last Jany give to my dst 1000 Louis d'ors, but if I should be permitted to go to Vienna or Berlin this year (which at present does not seem to me very improbable) what remains of that sum now will last but a very little while indeed. At Vienna the English and French Ambassadors' House rent alone costs 1000 guineas a year. If no material alteration takes place in my appointment I shall be obliged to you for getting the Committee for Foreign Affairs to write at least to the Minister here insisting on his complying with the former resolution of Congress relative to our Expenses. At the same time you will please to let me know what is done on this point that I may be able to regulate my affairs in time accordingly. I have written so largely to Congress and to R. H. Lee, that I have little to say here, but I agree entirely with the wise Man (you know who) that wrote me 18 months ago, that it was certain if you were ruined, it must be by ourselves. I cannot yet believe that C[ongress] is so lost to itself, or the people of America so blinded, as to be duped

or led into acts of folly and dishonor by the impudence and wickedness of S. Deane and his party, but I know him and C[ar]m[ichae]l so well that I am sure they will be perpetually busied in some plot, and I wish that Congress may not spend more time about them than 1000 such — are worth, and by that means neglect some considerations that are essentially necessary for your security and defence ; for our Enemies seem more elated with what they think a great division in Congress and among the People at large, and the success they have had in Georgia, than they have ever been yet, so that they are determin'd at this moment on their old plan of unconditional submission. I think the prospect seems to look as if the War wou'd still be long, and surely in common sense America shou'd look forward and be provided as well as she can for such an Event, which will be the most effectual mode of shortening its duration. But you may lay it down as a maxim that the Obstinacy of the King of G. B. (who is as absolute in G. B. as the K. of Prussia is in Berlin) is such, and his malignity so great, that he will never make peace on Independent or honorable principles for Am<sup>a</sup> while there is the least glimmering hope of success. Lord Bute and the Scotch are his only favorites, and you know too well what the Scotch are. We have a great deal to do, against this Brute and his Scotch mirmidons

before we can hope for Peace, and I am sure they must be driven from off the Continent before they will be bro't to Reason. Take all the care you can of False *Brethren* among yourselves; Gov<sup>r</sup> Johnstone says there are some working for his Wages and I think they may be discover'd, for surely their first object will be to create dissensions and with the true *Scotch cunning* flattering the People into an Idea of their Security, while fire, sword, chains and tortures are preparing for them. If you are but properly on your guard, and United, I do not fear what our Enemies can do against us; and your best security will be to rely on your own efforts and not to rely too much on any external aid. I wish you may be properly supplyed for this Campaign, for I understand that no part of the contract made with nobody knows who, under the name of Hortalez & Co., will be complyed with; at least, nothing that I can hear of, has been done yet. Your sound judgment needs no caution, but I wish some of our near friends wou'd remember that it is not all gold that glisters, and that all the funds which some people have to traffic on, are fine words, professions and promises, which they never think of afterwards, unless 'tis to laugh at those who think they mean anything by them. Give this hint to those you may think want it. Spain as yet keeps aloof, but her immense preparations for War continue with as much vigor as ever, and

she is more formidable at Sea than she has been since the famous Armada. 'Tis supposed she will either force a peace, or commence the War with G. B. before this campaign is over. I cannot pretend to say what is in the womb of time, but it appears to me not within the chances hardly of possibility, that G. B. should subjugate America, if she is but firm, active and unanimous. I came here for reasons you will see mention'd to Congress, but Dr<sup>r</sup> F—— no doubt from motives of malignity and something worse, refuses to give me any assistance. I shall however do all that is in my power for our Country and shall return in a day or two to Germany. The Doctor and his Junto, it is said, expect S[ilas] D[eane] over here every day, cloath'd in Triumph and cover'd with honors; however his great support with you is recalled, and a much better Man apparently, appointed to succeed him. I left my Family not very well tho' 'tis increased by a Boy that is call'd Brutus, least there sh<sup>d</sup> be in his [ ] a Tarquin or a Cæsar in America.\*

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TO BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

PARIS, Hotel D'Espagne,  
Rue Guenegeaud, 30 March, 1779.

*Sir:*

I had the honor of writing the 23 of January last

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\* From the *Arthur Lee Papers*, in Harvard University.

to the Commissioners of Congress at the Court of Versailles, requesting that they would in consequence of the recommendation of Count de Vergennes, apply to the Prince De Mont Barey for certain artillery, arms, and ammunition for the State of Virginia, which I had authority to engage that State to pay for, as soon as it was practicable to send their commodities to Europe for that purpose. To this letter I have not received any answer, nor do I know whether any application on the business has been made to Prince De Mont Barey or not. I am now therefore to request, that you, Sir, will be so good, as Minister Plenipotentiary here from Congress, to do this favor to the State of Virginia, in which case I will do myself the honor of waiting on you any time to-morrow that you shall appoint; with a list of the articles wanted, the particulars of which were annexed to my letter above mentioned. Those things that appear to me most necessary to be immediately despatched are 20,000 stand of fusils, with bayonets compleat; 30 tons best cannon powder; 20 ton best fusil powder, and the more so, as I apprehend Congress depends on each State for supplying these things for the troops they raise for the general service this campaign. I have the honor, &c.

P. S. The favor of an answer is requested by the bearer.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO WILLIAM LEE.

PASSY, 30 March, 1779.

Sir:

I do not recollect to have seen the letter you mention. When Capt. Lemaire came over last year, and made known here the wants of Virginia, I found three different merchants of ability who offered each of them separately to supply the whole. I do not know why their offers were not accepted, and the business hitherto remains undone. I have heard that cannon and some stores have been obtained of the government by your brother, but know not the particulars. I shall be glad to see you on the subject and to be better informed. I shall dine to-day in the city, and will do myself the honor of calling on you between 5 and 6 o'clock. But if it should be inconvenient to you to be then at home, I will expect you at Passy the morning following. I have the honor &c.

B. FRANKLIN.\*

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FRANKLIN TO WILLIAM LEE.

PASSY, 2 April, 1779.

Sir:

Before I apply for the arms you desire, I wish to be informed whether your brother did not apply for them at the same time he applied for the cannon he obtained, or since, in consequence of the letter you mentioned to have sent us in January last, and whether they were refused or promised.

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\*See *Franklin to Patrick Henry, 26 February, 1779.*

Since I had the honor of seeing you I have received an application from the government of Maryland for a similar quantity of arms and military stores, which I am requested to obtain in the same manner, and these, with the orders of Congress, will make so vast a quantity, that I apprehend greater difficulties in obtaining them. I should be glad, therefore, if a part could be obtained elsewhere, that the quantity now to be applied for might be diminished. On this occasion permit me to mention that the D'Acostas have presented a memorial to me setting forth that they had provided arms, etc., to a great amount, in consequence of a contract made with you through your brother, and that for no other reason but because they were not finished at the time agreed, there having been a delay of a month, which they say was not their fault, but inevitable, he had refused to take them. Upon this they desire that I should procure justice to be done them, or that I would approve of their sending the goods and endeavor to have the contract complied with on the part of Virginia. I declined having anything to do with the affair, but I wish you to consider whether it would not be prudent to moderate this little difference with those people, and take the advantage of sending those arms, which have been proved good, and I suppose still lie at Nantes ready to be shipped immediately, rather than wait the success of a doubtful application.

I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO ARTHUR LEE.

F——T, 17 April, [1779.]

By mistake the original bills of *neave* at D. were bro't away. They amount to 12,200 livres. He has sent his whole demand, which is £12,921.3.\* In some things it is rather more than what is right tho' on the whole not worth a dispute; therefore he ought to be paid the balance, which is £721.3s; that is £12,200, the bills which I have, and £721.3 makes £12,921.3, the whole amount of his demand: which please to settle and pay finally. I have Deane's letter to Beaumarchais—a great part is in cipher, but I think I can make out abuse of Congress, the dissatisfaction of *Beaumarchais*, telling who and who are together, &c. It is dated December 3d., and has been published at New York.† He says the debt of America is about 100

\* Livres.

† An extract from this letter was printed in the London Chronicle of March 27th: "I have now spent near five months in this city, and though I have wrote ten letters to Congress, have been unable even to obtain an answer, and shall reap no satisfaction by my voyage hither, but the knowledge of our affairs, and of the method in which they are conducted, if that can be called a satisfaction. Flour is now eight pounds per cwt. in this once plentiful city, and about 20 at Boston, and everything in proportion, from which I leave you to draw your conclusions, as to our money, and what must be our public debt soon, it being near one hundred millions of dollars, one-half of which has been contracted the last campaign."

millions of dollars, the half of which was spent in the last year (viz. 1778); he gives a dreadful account of the situation of things in America. He adds: "Berkenhout has been imprisoned here. Pray get a minute account of that man's correspondence with Mons. Lee at Chaillot, and ask Petrie for a copy of a letter which he received in March last from London, or an extract from it which gave the information of the signing the treaty." This accounts for the opening and stoppage of letters, for we may suppose some letters have got to hand with the same request. You may have a copy, if you want it, or send for y<sup>e</sup> paper, which is the *Morning Chronicle* No. 3074, of March 27, 1779. I think it will be quite necessary for *Izard* and *W. Lee* to put down all that they know which passed relative y<sup>e</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> while they were about; to counteract the combined wickedness of Deane and *Beaumarchais*. I suppose it will be allow'd that the proposition of *W. Lee* was well founded, and ought to have been adopted, of insisting on *Franklin* demanding a categorical answer from the *French Court* relative to the precise present construction of 1. I hardly expect any advices from Congress very speedily, tho' I have now very little doubt about what will be their complexion when they do come.

Besides the recruits and new Scotch corps, now sailing for America to the number of 5000 from

England, there will go or rather have already gone from this country about 3,000 recruits, which will make Clinton's reinforcement at least 8,000, so that with his refugees, he will be much stronger than last year. I wish this may be known in time in America, and that they may also be advised that they must depend entirely on their own efforts, as they will not have the least foreign aid. Is *Arthur Lee* quite sure that 172 is entirely trustworthy? Folly and self-conceit sometimes does much more harm than even a wicked heart. *W. Lee* says he cannot be quite satisfied with himself, as he is afraid he was lately much too open with 172—notwithstanding he was then, as he is now, convinced that he ought to have been much on the reserve.

I have not heard one word about the box of tea which I left under my bed in the chamber, and wrote from Meaux desiring it to be sent here by the diligence. My love to Ludwell, who I hope mends in his new employment. He forgot to remind me of the pen knife which was of course bro't away. Peace is not finally concluded here, but it looks as if it would be so, about the last of the month. When you have anything authentic from America, be it good or bad, let me know it. My compliments to Mr. Ford and all friends. All our best wishes attend you. Farewell.

P. S. This moment was received your billet of

the 11<sup>th</sup>. It will certainly be proper to demand of Petrie an *explicit* account of those concurrent circumstances, without any prevarication, or any of his northern wit. If you please to demand of him in my name, to whom I wrote giving an account of the signing of the Treaty, the words and date of my letter, and to whom it was addressed, or who it was that authorized him to—but upon recollection I think it more proper to write to him on the subject myself. Therefore, beg you immediately to transmit me a copy of his letter to you, also what Mr. F.\* heard B.† say on this subject and the copy of my letter to Dr. F. which was left when I came away.

The children are somewhat better than they have been, and the two Simons are indifferent. Pray do not delay your answer a single post, least I may be so occupied as not to be able to pay proper attention to P[etrie].‡

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TO MONS<sup>X</sup> LE BLANC.

19 April, [1779.]

Yours of the 4th instant did not get to hand by some days so soon as it should have done, by which means several principal people had left this place

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\* W. T. Franklin.

† Bancroft.

‡ Addressed "Monsieur Lee, Hotel d'Espagne, Rue Guineaud, Faubourg St Germain, à Paris."

before I had an opportunity of talking with them on the subject. However, I have spoken to some about the business, but you know the people of this part are naturally slow, and sometimes over cautious about ingaging in new schemes. They seem however to relish the business as I have represented it to them, and some have promised to make a tryal, but they all object to sending any advice whatever to Versailles of their cargoes or destination, for they recollect the conduct of the English last war with respect to the Dutch, and they are apprehensive that by some means or other, the English may get information of their designs and seize their vessels. Therefore, if that point was insisted on, they declare they cannot attempt the trade. I have therefore ventured to say, that they may be assured their vessels will be freely admitted to trade in the French West India Islands without giving ye information to Versailles, as you desired, and I now wish you to tell me whether this is approved, and whether I may be authorized to write to some sea ports on the same plan. The measures I have taken and shall take, I hope will be productive of good effects, but still it will not be prudent to rely too much on their success; for it will not be an easy matter while the British fleet is the strongest in the West Indies to get your Islands properly and fully supplied with provisions. Therefore every method in your

power should be used, and with the greatest diligence, to accomplish so desirable an end. Somehow or other all your proceedings, especially with respect to the Marine, do get very quickly to England. Surely some method might be fallen on to stop this, at least to prevent such communication from going by the post, and at least to delay it, when sent by particular persons. For many months past two of the cleverest and most expert clerks have been selected out of the Postoffice in London, and one of them placed at Harwich, and the other at Dover, in the post offices there, to open and examine all the letters that come down there to come to this Continent, by Calais, Ostend or Holland. For instance, all the letters, or at least the greater part of them, that come from London on the Tuesdays, and get to Dover and Harwich on the Wednesday, are kept for the packet boat that sails on the Sunday following, in which time they are examined, and such as the examiner thinks proper are returned to the ministry in London, and those letters that are sent from London on the Friday night and get to Harwich and Dover on the Saturday, are kept for the packet boat that sails on the Thursday, and so they go on in rotation, unless by contrary winds the packet boat is detain'd long enough for the examination to be finished.\* If some plan similar to this is not

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\*This statement is fully verified by the *Stevens Fac-similes*.

practiced in France, I am sure it should be done; for nothing would be more easy, by stationing a proper person at Boulogne or Calais, and at the last post in France on the route to Ostend and Holland, which would be much better than having it done in Paris. What a great stroke it would have been, had measures been taken to intercept the British convoy, the troops and prisoners for New York. Your letters should not have the Versailles postmark on them.

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TO BARON D' ARENDT.

GHENT, 20 April, 1779.

I have had the honor of receiving your favor of the 15th inst<sup>t</sup>, and am sorry that I was so unlucky as to leave Frankfort before you arrived there. I had before the pleasure of receiving two or 3 letters from you from Breslau, that came under care to Mr. Artope, which I should have duly answered had you not forbid it. As far as you have been pleased to communicate to me relative to the intentions of the court where you have been, with respect to us they appear to me much less favorably disposed than they were some time ago; for the free entry of American merchant vessels into their ports was always agreed to, even when our affairs were in the most perilous situation. There were promises once to go much farther, and at present I

cannot see any reason that should prevent his Majesty from openly acknowledging our Independence, which measure would unquestionably be of infinite benefit to his dominions as well as of very great advantage to his revenue. I am authorized by Congress to treat with his Majesty, but have no power to appoint a substitute for that purpose, nor is there any person in Europe that has such a power; however, if you find it will be of any use or advantage to the cause of America you are authorized to say that I am now impowered to enter into a commercial treaty with his Majesty, on terms which in my opinion are infinitely more advantageous to his Majesty than what will be granted to any power in Europe a few years hence; and finally I conceive that America, like a rich young virgin heiress, just ripe for the joys of matrimony, should wait to be wooed and not go a wooing, especially where she has so much more to give than she can receive. . . . \*

TO JOHN DE NEUFVILLE AND SON.

FRANKFORT, 22 April, 1779.

*Gentlemen:*

I have before me your esteemed favor of the 16<sup>th</sup>

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\* "But I have never yet changed the opinion I gave in Congress, that a virgin State should preserve the virgin character, and not go about suitoring for alliances, but wait with decent dignity for the applications of others." *Franklin to Arthur Lee, 21 March, 1777.*

inst<sup>t</sup>, and hope the city of Amsterdam will succeed at last in bringing the whole seven provinces to agree in supporting a respectable neutrality and protecting their commerce to the full extent of their Treaties with G. Britain. The Swedes do not trifle as your States have done, for I find their Men of War have already convoyed into France a large fleet of their merchantmen loaded with naval stores. I shall always be happy in rendering you any services in my power, and I do not doubt that your house will gain credit and influence in every part of America, if any of the intelligence I have sent, relative to what we did at Aix, does but luckily arrive.

I am well convinced that G. Britain wou'd long ago have given up the point and let your commerce be free and not interrupt it, as they find that France alone with America is more than they can well manage; but the British ministry depend on the P. of O., and some other dependents that they have among you, to embarrass your proceedings and prevent the body of the Seven Provinces from exercising their just rights. Pray did you see Dr. Franklin when you were at Paris? The scheme you propose of small vessels to carry on the American Trade seems to be a very good one, and I will try to get you some adventurers in this Country, but you know the people here are slow in determining, therefore we must work with patience.

The provision trade to the French West Indies I see very little risk in, and a Prospect of great Profit. The vessels should go to Ireland and load beef and pork, salted and clear, for St. Eustatia, and send flour from Holland. This vessel might easily slip into a French Island. Be so good as to forward the inclosed letter to Mr. Stockton, if he has left your city.\* I am &c.

## TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT, 4 May, [1779.]

Just as usual. I requested in my last that *three* papers might be sent to me, and only ONE of the three is sent. However, you seem to have been in high spirits the 27 ult<sup>o</sup>, and I wish you had given us some hint of the cause, that we might have participated; for nothing very exhilarating appears in our horizon.

Be so good as to let your next cover the copy of

\*Amsterdam.

"M. Neufville's first propositions were so much out of the way that I could not accept them. He required a fifth part of the loan to be sent over to him annually during the first five years in the produce of America for sale, and the money to remain in his hands as a fund for paying off the debt in the last five years. By this means he would have had the use of our money while we were paying interest for it. He dropped this demand on my objecting to it, and undertook to procure a subscription on reasonable terms." *Franklin to Dumas, 18 March, 1779.*

my letter to Doctor F—n which I left with you when I came away last. 'Tis to be hoped that Mr. F[or]d's sudden decampment is on some really important object, which may be some small consolation for the disappointment it is to me, as I intended him to be the bearer of the inclosed letter to Saml. Petrie.\* As it is, unless some more proper person happens to be with you, I must request that either yourself or Ludwell will deliver it into his own hands, first taking a copy of it, and then sealing it, if 'tis tho't proper it should be so. The answer must be insisted on to be given in writing immediately to the person who delivers my letter. Of this answer I request you or the person who receives it to take a copy, whether 'tis seal'd or not, and let it be kept with the copy of my letter. The answer you will please to enclose and direct à Mons<sup>r</sup> Duncombe, au soin de Mess<sup>r</sup> Freres Overman, Negociants, Bruxelles, and put your letter under a blank cover directed to that house. Let me intreat you to be particular in conducting this affair in the manner I desire, for it embarrasses and perplexes me exceedingly when

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\* "As this Mr. Petrie is a stock jobber himself, and united with those Americans here, who are in the same line, I imagine that the having imputed the intelligence to my brother will appear, upon inquiry, to have been originally a trick of these People, such as is very common in the alley; which Mr. Deane has converted into a criminal accusation against me." *Arthur Lee to the President of Congress, 26 April, 1779.*

things are put into an entire different train from the arrangement made by myself. If sickness or something as material does not prevent it, I propose to be at Bruxelles the 15th, where I may meet your answer, and if it should be necessary, I shall proceed to Paris; of this you may judge by the tenor of Petrie's answer. At all events I wish to have a line from you at Bruxelles, where 'tis probable I may not stay longer than the 16<sup>th</sup>. Surely you will let me know when Spain speaks out, as it must have a great influence on my conduct and affairs. We have no certainty of the German peace being signed; tho' there does not seem to be the least doubt of every point being settled on all sides, but the terms are not known here exactly, nor is there a certainty of *American Independence* being a part. From some hints to me here, it is probable that *Beaumarchais* is at the bottom and contriver of the Bastile report in the E[nglish] papers and other things in the Leyden Gazette. Can't he be search'd out? Our best compliments to Mr I[zard] and family. His letter of the 27th. ulto. was received. Madame, Mademoiselle, and the Postilion, &c., are in the usual way, neither very well, nor very ill; tho' the weather is disagreeable for the season. The proclamation of the government of Georgia will show pretty clearly to the rest of America, what they might expect under the British government. A few Scotch adventurers, coun-

cillors, judges, attorneys, secretaries, &c., &c., &c.  
Our best love attends you all.

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TO SAMUEL PETRIE.

FRANKFORT, 4 May, 1779.

I have been long sensible that many unwarrantable calumnies have been propagated with respect to me, but I was never able to fix precisely on the author, or propagator of any of them, until this day, when my brother, Arthur Lee, Esq<sup>r</sup>, has favored me with the copy of a letter from you to him, dated April 9th, 1779, wherein you say:—

"I well remember reading to him (meaning Mr. Deane) a paragraph out of a letter which I had received from London, stating that intelligence of the signing of the Treaty with France had been transmitted there the very night on which it was signed, expressed in terms which cou'd not have been misunderstood, and which intelligence from a concurrence of circumstances appeared to have been communicated by your brother, the alderman. When I show'd the letter to M<sup>r</sup> Deane, I meant only jocularly to upbraid his secresy respecting a transaction, which I understood your brother had unreservedly communicated several weeks before."

Now, sir, I do not intend at present to make any observations on this letter, nor do I intend to be *jocular*; but to insist seriously, first, on your giving me explicitely your authority for charging me

with having transmitted to London intelligence of the signing of the Treaty with France, the very night on which it was signed, and which, you add, I communicated unreservedly. Secondly, I insist on your naming the persons to whom in London I communicated this intelligence unreservedly, of the signing of the Treaty with France, the very night on which it was signed. 3<sup>dly</sup> I desire you will precisely mention those terms which could not have been misunderstood.

To these questions I expect precise answers, without any evasion or prevarication; otherwise you must be considered and treated not only as the propagator, but as the author of this calumny.

The gentleman who delivers this will receive your answer, which I insist on your giving to him immediately, that I may know what further steps to take, being determined to make the business very short.

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TO FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE.

FRANKFORT IN GERMANY, 10 May, 1779.

*My dear Brother:*

I wrote to you from Paris y<sup>e</sup> 26 of last March, which I suppose will go in the Alliance, and this I hope will reach Paris in time for the Chevalier de La Luzerne, who is appointed to succeed Mr. Gerard. The letter you will forward, or not, as you

think proper, agreeable to what I desired with the original. I only wish you to inform me whether you have sent them or not. The Baron de Breteuil's letter is only intended to enable you immediately to put a stop to any misrepresentations (if any should be propagated) relative to my conduct at Vienna. My proceedings since, I am well satisfied, will appear fully to my honor and credit whenever they are fully enquired into, at least as far as obtaining the general acknowledgment of the Independence of America by ye principal powers of Europe shall be tho't praiseworthy. The 3 sheets from pages 1 to 12 inclusive are intended for your information and R. H. L's. The copys of the letters are faithfull, and you may assert them to be such any where and on any occasion. The remarks and observations on the letters are intended to give you some further idea of the Partys and their proceedings, than perhaps you have already. Some late proceedings with you appear extraordinary, but I am not surprized at them, knowing how deeply a certain great man\* (as he is called with you) is leagued with Mr. D.† and his partizans on both sides of the water, in private interested schemes. This may account for ye zeal in attempting to get Hortalez & Co. paid over again their enormous demand. I suppose you know who

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\*Gerard.

†Silas Deane.

they are that compose this famous company; for with all the industry imaginable, I can't find out who they are; when things look prosperous, and property is to be got hold of, there are enough of Mr. D's old connections ready to seize it; but when anything is to be done, or money demanded, nobody can find out a single person that composes this company. You may be assured that the *Great Man* wrote to his Principals, when Mr. D—'s first publication came out, that he was unanimously approved in Congress.. You know whether this is true or not; but it may serve to shew what confidence ought to have been placed in his Testimony in favor of D. with you, and I think shows clearly that D. would not have dared to do and say half that he has done, if he had not been sure of being backed by y<sup>e</sup> other. These things, however, will cost our dear country all the blood, treasure, devastation and massacres of this campaign, which I am perfectly convinced would never have taken place—without they had happened to encourage our enemies in making one or more attempt to accomplish their diabolical purposes of subjugating and enslaving America.

By a resolve of Congress in Febry. 1778, the commissioners at the Court of Versailles were authorized to appoint Commercial Agents in y<sup>e</sup> different parts of Europe. This power is exercised now by Dr. F. as the sole minister at that court,

and I suppose his caution will prevent him from giving any formal appointment to his nephew, Mr. Williams,\* tho' he may be principally employed in y<sup>e</sup> mercantile business; but it looks at present as if the plan was forming to appoint *nominally* a Frenchman, named *Peltier Du Doyer*, who has acted at Nantes sometimes as Agent or Head Manager for Mr. Williams in his former transactions, sometimes as agent for Mr. Monthieu, sometimes as agent for Mr. Beaumarchais. I am still of the same opinion now, which I frequently communicated to you and others during my stay in France, that Congress should not have anything to do with commerce on y<sup>e</sup> Publick account—for if they have, individuals, and perhaps not the most honest or deserving of y<sup>e</sup> community, will receive all the advantages, while the publick funds must furnish

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"I have no desire to screen Mr. Williams on account of his being my nephew; if he is guilty of what you charge him with, I care not how soon he is deservedly punished and the family purged of him; for I take it that a rogue living in a family is a greater disgrace to it than one *hanged out* of it. If he is innocent, justice requires that his character should be speedily cleared from the heavy charge with which it has been loaded." *Franklin to Arthur Lee, 27 March, 1779.* When Arthur Lee was asked to state his objections to Williams' accounts, he wrote to be excused, "now that it was no longer his indispensable duty, from concerning himself with a business which is in much abler hands. If Congress should call upon me for further reasons than those I have already given, it will then be my duty to act, and I will obey."

the expense and pay all the loss. Such has been y<sup>e</sup> issue of such conduct in all times and in all countries. Therefore, we may safely say it will be so again. But if ye spirit is so strong that there is no resisting the torrent, you may surely prevail to have the political and commercial affairs in Europe placed in different hands, uncontroled by and unconnected with each other; that is, in y<sup>e</sup> direction and management of their separate departments, each agent to be answerable only to Congress for his conduct, and both the political and mercantile agents should be nominated by Congress. The political agent or minister should have nothing more to do with money or mercantile matters, than to obtain money or loans from governments, &c.; and to supply the mercantile agent with what he wants from time to time, that he may comply with the orders of Congress. This plan is so plain, not in y<sup>e</sup> least complicated, and so unobjectionable, that I think with y<sup>e</sup> least industry you might be able to get it carried into execution, and I will pledge myself that in a very little time the good effects to the Public will be plainly visible. Therefore I beg you to consult R. H. L, and other sound patriotic members on it, as well as what follows, which is of the highest importance.

'Tis now evident that the Peace of America must be settled in Europe, perhaps at Versailles, where you have now but one Minister, who will in that

case have the fate of America in his hands. I know that before any peace can finally take place, it must have the consent of Congress; but you and every man will easily see how difficult, nay almost impossible, it will be for America to resist an arrangement for peace that is made between France, Spain and England, tho' America may think it a very bad, injurious and dangerous one. Prudence then directs that every precaution should be taken to prevent such a disagreeable occurrence, and without delay: for no one can say how soon, or how late, such an arrangement may take place. The only possible preventative that occurs to me at present is, for Congress by a firm, explicit and positive resolution to order y<sup>e</sup> minister in France not to approve here, or recommend to Congress, any arrangement or plan of Peace without having previously consulted *all* y<sup>e</sup> public ministers or commissioners of Congress in Europe, and obtained the approbation of at least a majority of them for such plan. On such an occasion, they might all easily be assembled at Paris, to consult together personally on such a very important business.

On these two points I must beg you to let me know, what you think of them, or may do in them. I really am so totally uninformed about the state that my private affairs are in that I cannot say anything about them; and the uncertainty of what may have been the determinations of Congress

relative to their European arrangements prevents me from saying anything about myself, or my designs for a future livelihood. For indeed, I cannot form or even think of any plan until I know what has passed with you, so that you may easily conceive that only breathing from day to day, is not the most enviable situation in the world; however, I am every moment attentive in rendering our country every service in my power, some fruits of which have already appeared, and more important ones I expect will appear very soon; and tho' the Tory, Mr. C[arter] Braxt[o]n may choose or wish to disbelieve it, I can with truth assure you that our affairs have a better prospect in Europe in general than they have ever had yet, and I hope neither folly or roguery in America will put them in a worse state. I hope soon to hear that Prevost and his army are either prisoners, or at least driven out of Georgia. Let America look at the list of names published by Prevost and Campbell for their Utopean government of Georgia, and then she must tremble at the idea of what would have been her fate had she submitted, or was she now to submit to the tyrant of G. B. and his Scotch mermydons.

\* \* \* \* \*

P. S. I have furnished you with some materials and information to guard you against any attempts that may be made to injure our country by interested and designing men; but I think Har-

mony should be cultivated as much as possible, at least 'till we have peace, and therefore, unless the public safety renders it unavoidable, all contention should be stop'd in the bud.

## TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT, 10 May, [1779.]

The letter was to Dr. Fra—n of date ye 9th. ulto. which he has never answered. Ludwell's fame has reached this. The letters have been ever used exactly as you mention, except in the first instance to Mr. I[zard], but if the application in one way would not answer, there was only another; in which they cou'd possibly be used.

I wrote the 8th, and shall expect an answer from the commissioners. \* \* \*

The documents you sent are too informal to borrow money on in this quarter, especially from individuals, which I wonder at, since Mr. [John] King was particularly informed what would be necessary. I presume you have kept a copy of the articles wanted; if you have not, and can find the funds, I will return this. Perhaps *the French Court* may do the thing if properly applied to. I mean to set off to-morrow for *Vienna* but still wish letters to be sent here as formerly until you are advised otherwise. Ludwell should remember that tho' I can sometimes make out he means *the* by two scratches

and a dot, it is impossible for me to make out strange names of persons and places by hieroglyphic characters. In the Courrier de l' Europe, No. 34, April 28, there are some curious particulars about Capt. Jones; and it is somewhat extraordinary that the single house attack'd in Scotland, belong'd to the Earl of Selkirk, who from first to last has been alone among the Scotch Lords, a friend to America. If you proceed in the scheme of borrowing money, can't £40,000 sterling, or about 1,000,000 of livres be added for the State of Virginia, in which case the goods they order can be bo't at the best market, and I am quite certain that the whole can be got in this quarter at least one fifth part cheaper than in France. Answer me on this subject.

All here are in better health than my self, travelling perhaps may reinstate me. I have been of some service here, in obstructing a British contract for 2000 troops. Our love attends you all. Farewell.

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TO MONSIEUR MARBOIS.

FRANKFORT, 16 May, [1779.]

*Sir:*

It gives me singular pleasure to comply with the request of his Excellency, the Baron de Breteuil, to forward to you letters of introduction to some of my friends in America, which are now inclosed,

and I shall be happy if they prove of any utility to you; for the terms in which his Excellency makes mention of you, give me the most flattering hopes of great and good consequences from your going to America; therefore I sincerely wish you a quick and happy passage, and that on your arrival there you may find everything to your satisfaction.

'Tis very clear now to all the world, that our enemies, the King, ministers and people of G. B., place their chief and only hope of getting again any footing in America, on the dissensions that their emissaries will create, not only in Congress, but among the army and people at large, and by circulating awful falsehoods and insinuations, to occasion distrust between America and her good ally, the King of France, and the French nation.

'Tis therefore evidently both prudent and circumspect on those persons who wish to confirm and strengthen the union between France and the United States of America, and to render their present alliance as durable and advantageous as possible to both parties, to exert themselves in putting a stop to all dissensions and differences in America, as soon as possible. There ever was, and always will be, parties in all governments, particularly in popular ones; therefore they must be expected in America; but I shall be concerned to hear that there is any party existing there, that is designated otherwise than by the names of American, or Whig

Party, and the English or Tory Party: to the first of these every good patriot will unite himself, as well as every well wisher to France, for 'tis evident that the true interest of France and America are now the same; and tho' I fear America has yet many severe struggles to undergo, before she happily arrives at Peace, I have no doubt of her being finally successful and that she will firmly and gratefully adhere to her engagements and alliance with France. I have the honor &c.

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TO FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE.

FRANKFORT IN GERMANY, 20 May, 1779.

I wrote you a long letter y<sup>e</sup> 10 inst., that with the inclosures made 3 full sheets, which I hope you will receive. Since that (tho' I have not received a letter from you of later date since May last, nor one from our brother R. H. L., of a later date than June) I have heard that my letters to you both of Oct? 15 ult. have been received, and I hope the power of attorney that went with them, is safely received also. I learn with very great concern that R. H. L. intended to resign his seat in Congress in April last, which for y<sup>e</sup> welfare and happiness of America I hope most cordially he has not done, unless it is to fill some important office in our own particular country. I should suppose he will have

considered this is as critical and dangerous a time for America as she has yet experienced, and therefore the wisest heads and most honest hearts will all be wanted, to save her from great and impending evils. 'Tis true that some late public proceedings would be sufficient to disgust a man of fair and honorable principles in common times, but in the present moment of peril all private feelings should give way to the salus Respublica. Besides, by a resignation y<sup>e</sup> wicked ones would gain a triumph, and in short there are a thousand strong reasons against it. You can't say that my practice and preaching are different, for besides the loss of upwards of £6000 sterling of my property, I have given up an honorable and respectable office for life in the first city in y<sup>e</sup> universe, which no American ever had the honor of filling before me, and in fact sacrificed my own and whole family's peace by entering into y<sup>e</sup> pubic service. For really y<sup>e</sup> wonted happiness we enjoyed before has been a stranger in my family for two years past. We breath indeed, and that is all. Y<sup>e</sup> wandering and unsettled state we are in, makes our living expensive, tho' it is considerably worse and more disagreeable than ever I experienced before, which makes things unpleasant at the moment, and more so on reflexion, as it is at y<sup>e</sup> public expense. All this I bear with fortitude from the invincible zeal I have for liberty, and from y<sup>e</sup> love of my country

whose cause I am serving, and shall continue to serve to my latest breath in spite all y<sup>e</sup> D's, the C's, the F's, the B—ns,\* &c., on the face of the earth. I wish only to know the resolution and plan of C: with respect to me, for in a state of uncertainty, it is impossible to conduct my affairs with any degree of propriety. Therefore I beg you will write me fully and particularly every thing that relates to myself by several opportunities, for 'tis of little use to me what is written to our brother at Paris. I do not write to R. H. L., from y<sup>e</sup> uncertainty of his being at C[ongress], but if he is, with you there, pray give my love to him, and show him this, and also let him know that his four pieces of linen have been bo't ever since Xmas, tho' they are but just sailed for V[irginia] in y<sup>e</sup> Gov<sup>r</sup>. Livingston, and addressed to the care of Ellis at G[reen] S[pring]. I can't complain of either of you for not writing to me, because I am sure you have been both fully employed in our country's service; but I must beg that one of you at least will drop me a line by every opportunity, putting it under a blank cover addressed to M<sup>r</sup>. Grand, Banquier, Paris.

You will have so much intelligence from Great Britain by the Chevalier de La Luzerne, that I shall only give you my clear and decided opinion, that the war will continue another year, unless we

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\* Deane, Carmichael, Franklin, Braxton.

or our allies gain such decided advantages this campaign as to bring our enemies to their senses, for they seem to be more and more enveloped in folly, obstinacy and wickedness every day. The British Ministry weak as they are, seem to have got on the blind side of the Spanish Court, for it seems pretty clear that they will be duped this year as they were last year, at least so far as not to declare till 'tis too late to do anything this Campaign, which is the great object of the British Ministry. For which purpose they flatter in the basest manner and promise a thousand things, not one of which they mean to perform.\* Our friends in Holland gain ground every day against the English party, tho' the Prince of Orange is at its head. Sweden and Denmark have fitted out fleets as well as Holland, to protect their commerce from the British piracy, and the Empress of Russia, who was the only power that they boasted of as their firm ally in Europe (you know they boast publicly

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\* It was Spain that was duping England, and with consummate diplomacy, holding out the expectation of her complete neutrality. But France was also deceived by promises of assistance, often promised but always deferred when the time for action came, until April, 1779, when a formal agreement between the two powers was attained. France was to invade Britain, and assist Spain in recovering Minorca, her stations in Central America and Florida; and neither court was to make peace until Gibraltar had been restored. On June 16th the Spanish ambassador at London declared war.

and even in P[arliamen]t of their savage and barbarous Indian allies in America,) has lately declared to the British Court, that if any of its ships of war or armed vessels should presume to stop, arrest, or even visit or search a vessel under Russian colors, she will take the captains and crews of such British vessels and treat them as pirates. This is a manly and decided declaration. The peace between the Emperor and King of Prussia is just signed, therefore I can't say as yet with certainty what effect that event will have on our affairs in this quarter. But it is probable the King will look at the business a little longer before he strikes, and I shall not be surprised if he waits to see the issue of this campaign. The Emperor cannot do much without his mother, who at present thinks more of the other world than she does of this.

JOHN BONDFIELD TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

BORDEAUX, 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 1779.

*Sir:*

\* \* \* \* \*

It is with concern we have seen the effect of Mr Deane's imprudence ; giving thereby the most convincing proof of his unfitness to discharge the appointment he filled in the European department, and the justness of his recall, as all the calumnies he has published are founded on suppositions, and being groundless, will of course bring on himself the contempt due to his con-

duct. As part of his charge against M<sup>r</sup> William Lee glances obliquely on the appointment I received from M<sup>r</sup> Lee, as his deputy at this port, I hold it incumbent in justice to him, as also to myself, to expunge that part of the charge ; in consequence I enclose to you a certificate (duplicate I have transmitted to M<sup>r</sup> Lee,) which you will please to lay before the Committee of Congress charged with the examination of this affair.

Monsieur La Motte Picquet sailed from Isle Daix 7 ins<sup>t</sup>. He has with him five ships of the line, five frigates, sixty armed transports, eight thousand troops, also many American private ships. You will undoubtedly have heard of him before the receipt of this.

An expedition from St. Malo went against Jersey. The alarm was given in England ; the fleet destined for North America, under Admiral Arbuthnot was sent to relieve the Island, by which a diversion was given that will retard the departure of the ships from Europe, at least a month, and will thereby give M. La Motte Piquet leisure to execute his mission without interruption.

Peace in Germany [will soon] be established, by which England and France [will be the] only contending powers.

The unfunded debt, which it's said amounts to upwards of twenty millions sterling, will cramp the operations in Great Britain, and force her to accept of terms, which the longer deferred become the more ruinous.

Ireland appears ripe to tread in the path of America. They have entered into a confederation not to consume

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Peace in Germany [will soon] be established, by which England and France [will be the] only contending powers.

The unfunded debt, which it's said amounts to upwards of twenty millions sterling, will cramp the operations in Great Britain, and force her to accept of terms, which the longer deferred become the more ruinous.

Ireland appears ripe to tread in the path of America. They have entered into a confederation not to consume

and even in P[arliamen]t of their savage and barbarous Indian allies in America,) has lately declared to the British Court, that if any of its ships of war or armed vessels should presume to stop, arrest, or even visit or search a vessel under Russian colors, she will take the captains and crews of such British vessels and treat them as pirates. This is a manly and decided declaration. The peace between the Emperor and King of Prussia is just signed, therefore I can't say as yet with certainty what effect that event will have on our affairs in this quarter. But it is probable the King will look at the business a little longer before he strikes, and I shall not be surprised if he waits to see the issue of this campaign. The Emperor cannot do much without his mother, who at present thinks more of the other world than she does of this.

JOHN BONDFIELD TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

BORDEAUX, 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 1779.

*Sir:*

\* \* \* \* \*

It is with concern we have seen the effect of M<sup>r</sup> Deane's imprudence ; giving thereby the most convincing proof of his unfitness to discharge the appointment he filled in the European department, and the justness of his recall, as all the calumnies he has published are founded on suppositions, and being groundless, will of course bring on himself the contempt due to his con-

duct. As part of his charge against M<sup>r</sup> William Lee glances obliquely on the appointment I received from M<sup>r</sup> Lee, as his deputy at this port, I hold it incumbent in justice to him, as also to myself, to expunge that part of the charge ; in consequence I enclose to you a certificate (duplicate I have transmitted to M<sup>r</sup> Lee,) which you will please to lay before the Committee of Congress charged with the examination of this affair.

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Ireland appears ripe to tread in the path of America. They have entered into a confederation not to consume

or import any of the manufactures of England, until their remonstrances are attended to, so that what with open war, private cabals and empty treasury, Great Britain casts a most dismal aspect. How unforeseen events may change the prospect, time only can evince, for probabilities are against her.

We flatter ourselves convoys will be established to protect our trade with you, and thereby enable us to renew our operations your way, which the obstructions of late have totally stagnated.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, sir, your very hum<sup>b</sup>le servant,

JOHN BONDFIELD.

TO ARTHUR LEE.

LISLE, 26 May, 1779.

*My dear Brother:*

I received here this day yours of the 22d and 23d with the inclosures, and thank you much for the measures you have taken about the sorry creature.\* I send another letter inclosed which you will please to deliver and get his answer, if you judge it proper under the present situation of things, to [?] farther until he says himself he is in a condition to do what is right. Mr. Jenings told me what you say he told you, and I shall be very easy if all the World knows, for I am not afraid or ashamed of what I did. In truth I did ever believe the farce

\* Petrie.

about secrecy relative to signing the treaty was all a little trick of Mr. Deane's and his Junto's contrivance that they might gamble more successfully in the English funds; notwithstanding this, I never hinted the business to any person in Europe that was a stranger to its beginning and progress, except Mr. Jenings after it was finish'd, and then in such a manner that nobody but himself coud guess at what I meant. Mr. Jenings's conduct and character I fancy is too sufficiently known in America to render an apology necessary for such communication to him. I am sorry for R. H. L.'s determination of resigning, and hope it will not take place until there is Peace, which certainly must happen before next year is ended.

You must be mistaken in the dates of my letters he received. You say they were of the 15 and 21st of October, and that my powers about the estate were not received. Now I find that I did not write to him the 21st of October, and the power went enclosed with my letter of the 15th. of October. Pray clear up my doubts in your next, as I wish to be certain about the safety of the power, and send me the copy of the letter to Dr. F. as soon as you have time, for I want to write to him again on the subject. On this you may write to me at F——t as soon as you please, and give me any other American intelligence that you can, such as the members of Congress now, particularly from Vir-

ginia. Who is likely to succeed Henry as Governor? Is General Lee again in actual service? Where is Mr. Adams and Mr. Ford? What has induced R. H. L. to think of resigning? Don't send both my answers to Mr. D[eane] by the same ship. The 4 pieces of linnen for Chantilly are gone in the Gov<sup>t</sup> Livingston, and it would be well to send 6 lb. of bark and a few capital medicines, salt. of tart. emet, Rhub., some common purges, opiates, tinct. antimon., &c., for R. H. L. and F. L. L. by the Chevalier de la L[uzerne] or Mons<sup>t</sup> M[arboi]s. Nothing particular has lately happened in my quarter worth communicating to America, unless it is that our friends gain ground in Holland, and have, you know, lately obtained a final resolution of the States General for unlimited convoys, and the declaration of the Empress of Russia to the British ministry that her ships of war shall seize any British armed ship that shall presume to visit or arrest any vessel under Russian colors, and that the master and crew shall be treated as pirates. This is a plain and manly declaration. My return home being somewhat uncertain, I would not have you send anything relative to Petrie from you before the 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> of next month, that every possible accident may be guarded against, for all letters are open'd that come in my absence. Reinember me to all friends, particularly to all at the Hotel de Thoulouse. Adieu.

TO BARON DE BRETEUIL.

FRANKFORT, 6 June, 1779.

*Sir:*

\* \* \* I have the pleasure to inform your Excellency of the arrival of an American vessel that left Virginia the 1st of May; the captain of which reports that just before he sailed they had advice of a general engagement in Georgia, between the American and British forces, wherein the British army was defeated with the loss of 200 men killed and wounded, all their artillery, which they left on the field of battle, their baggage and tents. That what remained of our enemies were driven back to Savannah, from whence by means of their ships they may possibly escape to Florida. I understand that some supplies for America have sailed with Mon<sup>r</sup> De la Motte Picquet, taking the advantage of his convoy as far as they go together.

Since the pacification of Germany, to which your Excellency's able negotiations have so greatly contributed, has not produced any advantage to America, we have only to guard against any injury that may arise to us from it. Therefore I hope your Excellency will excuse me for again mentioning my apprehensions with respect to Russia attempting to interfere. She cannot indeed hurt America directly, but she may be of some injury to the marine of France, and thereby be the means of encouraging our enemies to continue the war.

I am induced to mention this, because I have just received information which appears to me authentic, that Prince Panin in particular, and his court in general, are inimical to the cause of America.

As the events of this campaign are uncertain, in prudence we ought to look forward in time and prepare for another. France has hitherto gone on with her Peace Establishment, while the expense of our enemies has been enormous, and their credit exhausted; but then we should not forget that by the means of their East India Company, they will next year raise their supplies easier than they did last year: however, a few vigorous efforts on our part will soon end the contest. My idea is that a vigorous and spirited war, tho' more expensive in the beginning, is always the most economical in the end. I remain, &c.

TO HENRY LEE.\*

FRANKFORT IN GERMANY, 7 June, 1779.

*Dear Sir:*

Unfortunate as I have been in not receiving letters from my friends in Virginia for near four years past, yet their *Letters of Exchange* find their

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\* Henry Lee was a cousin of William. He married, 1 December, 1753, Lucy, daughter of Charles Grymes, and sometime known as the "Lowland Beauty" of Washington's early romance. He was the father of "Light Horse Harry."

way, tho' not one farthing appears for the debts due to me. Among the rest I find one drawn by you, which surprises me a good deal, because I must suppose you sufficiently informed to know that it could not be paid. You are a Legislator and a Magistrate to render justice to others; therefore you cannot forget the Golden Law, do to your neighbor as you wou'd have done unto you. You have made laws and ordinances (the justice or propriety of which I do not mean to call in question) whereby all those who owe sterling debts, are authorized to pay off those debts with paper. In that manner I am obliged to receive many thousand pounds sterling for money advanced in London upwards of seven years ago, under an express and positive stipulation that the same should be repaid in sterling money in London without any deduction or charge whatever. Now, my dear Sir, I conceive that regulations and laws made by yourselves, must be equally binding on you as on me: on the other side, if my debtors are compelled to pay me in sterling money in London, I shall then be fully enabled to pay with ease every farthing of sterling money that I owe, as in that case the balance would be many thousand pounds in my favor. Therefore all I shall add on this head is, that with the same commodity, whatever it is, which I am compelled by your laws to receive for my debts, I must and can only pay what is due from me. So far on the justice and equity of your demand.

But it is proper to say a word or two on the impossibility of paying your draft. 'Tis now exactly two years since I left England to enter into ye service of my country, and being suddenly called away it was impracticable to settle my affairs or to collect what money was due me there, almost the whole of which has been detained from me in consequence of my being in the service of Congress. Since 1775, I have not received one farthing of remittances for y<sup>e</sup> larger debts due to me in America, nor for the produce of the Estate at Green Spring. 'Tis true, that for the greater part of the time since I left England the expence of my living has been paid, but that living has been infinitely worse than I had known for near thirty years before; and the fatigue and vexation beyond comparison greater than I ever experienced in my whole life. My employment 'tis true is honorable, but the reverse of being profitable; therefore, you may now easily determine that it is by no means in my power to pay any debts here that were formerly contracted, even if there was the fullest justice in the demand, and my inclination ever so urgent to comply with your request. The same answer I have given to Col. Mason, and the same I must give to every other person. On cool and calm consideration I have no doubt but that great share of justice and good sense which you both possess, will make you perfectly satisfied with my conduct. The post I

am in I look upon only as placing me as a mark for envy and detraction, for there are in the world unhappily too many Mr. Deanes, and C. Braxtons; but I am much mistaken if either of them would take my place, especially the latter, who from a ruined fortune is now amassing an immense Estate from ye distresses of his country. I have sent to Congress a full answer to Mr. Deane, which I conceive every unprejudiced and impartial man will allow to be completely satisfactory, and I hope they will permit so much to be published as may be necessary to refute his groundless aspersions.

I must say a word or two about ourselves, tho' I have not yet had the pleasure of receiving the letter which I understand you sent by Capt. Robinson. The shining merit of your two sons Henry and Charles I hear of from various quarters with infinite satisfaction, especially as your niece has selected Henry as a godfather to our sweet little Portia, now two years old, who is lovely as the rosy morn, and mild in temper as the heavenly cherubims. Pray let him know this. Our eldest son, William Ludwell, has all the fire and vivacity of his grandfather, with too great a portion of his feeble constitution. Our young son, Brutus,\* now 8 months old, has been constantly ill from his birth, arising in great measure from the uneasy state of

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\* Brutus died June 12, 1779.

mind his mother was in during her whole pregnancy. My dear Rib is better in health than myself, for I am nearly worn down. However we always think of you with the greatest affection, and beg that you and our dear aunt will accept of dutiful remembrance. I beg also to be remembered in the kindest manner to the Squire of Lee Hall, who by the bye can easily satisfy your debt, as he owes me four times as much sterling money as I owe you. As to public affairs, I can only say in general, that ours in particular wear a more promising aspect every day; but this truth you should never lose sight of, that the best security of America will be her reliance on herself alone.

## TO ARTHUR LEE.

FRANKFORT, 10 June, 1779.

*Dear Brother:*

I received yesterday yours of the 3<sup>d</sup> and shall be very happy to forward the Commodore's plan, if he will tell me how, or in what manner I can do it. I do not know any of the Marine Society or Hassenclever's address.\* He is you know a

\* Commodore Gillon had a scheme for the relief of Carolina, which appears to have been laid before the American Commissioners. He proposed to use the *Alliance*, then devoted to a special purpose and really not subject to Franklin's orders, and to raise a sum of 1,800,000 livres by subscription throughout France, to be advanced to the State on interest. "I cannot

*Schemer* and without money, but he talks a great deal and with much confidence, but I much question his being able to bring them into the scheme of the Frigates; however, there is no harm in making y<sup>e</sup> essay. The Marine Society, I understand, is composed of private merchants. I do not know how you got into correspondence with 155. We have most assuredly been wrong from y<sup>e</sup> beginning, as he has no more to do with what concerns us than a captain in the army. He continued his correspondence with *Carmichael*, who showed his letters to every one in *America*, that would read them. Perhaps this correspondence is kept up now. Pray give my compliments to the Commodore, and tell him he may command any services in my power.

This moment I received a billet of the 5<sup>th</sup> with an extract from a letter of Loudoun's, the date of which is not mentioned. If the determination about *Deane* is not made before 61 \* leaves *America*, the issue may be different from what is expected;

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but observe," replied Franklin, "that the agents from our different States running all over Europe begging to borrow money at high interest, has given such an idea of our poverty and distress as has exceedingly hurt the general credit, and made the loan for the United States almost impracticable." *Franklin to Gillon*, 5 July, 1779. Peter Hassenklever appears to have been a merchant in Prussia, perhaps of Embden. See *William Lee to Hassenklever*, 2 October, 1779, *post*.

\* An agent of Beaumarchais.

however, such proceedings have generally taken place on similar occasions; but at present I think the same principles that induced to resist one kind of oppression and one set of villains, should operate to persevere opposing another set of perhaps more abandoned villains. Let the determinations of *Congress* be what they may, the wickedness and plots of the Junto should be fully exposed. I hear that in *Virginia* the Cabal prevails as strong as in 122. The reason is plain. Next year the *governor* is to be *changed* and R. H. is to be put out of the question. If the letter of *Deane*, first published in *New York Gazette*, and your brother's in *Gazette*, do not open men's eyes, they must be determined to continue blind. As to *W. Lee*, he thinks at present, as he tells me, of giving up all concerns with public life as soon as the affair is decided in *Congress*, whatever complexion that decision may be of, as it does not appear to him that he can be of that service which he wishes. \* \* \*

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TO SAMUEL W. STOCKTON.

FRANKFORT, 13 June, 1779.

\* \* \* You must have seen many American papers and got a good deal of particular Intelligence from the 4 captains, all which I hope you will communicate fully to me, as you know that an American paper hardly ever gets here, and that the in-

telligence from Paris is generally very imperfect and unsatisfactory. 'Tis a happy thing that Prevost has got a drubing in time, for now it appears that the plan of our enemies was to keep on the defensive during the Summer, while Butler & their savage Allies were ravaging the frontiers, and in the winter Prevost was again to commence his offensive operations. By a hint in an old English paper it seems as if the Enemy had received a considerable repulse by Moultrie at Beaufort, w<sup>ch</sup> I never heard anything of before. In England they say positively in Parliament, that Spain has decidedly joined France, but I do not hear with certainty as yet of any movement that proves this, or that has comitted Spain ; a few weeks, however, must surely clear up all doubt. \* \* \* The new French Minister, the Chevalier de La Luzerne, left Paris on the 3<sup>d</sup> inst<sup>t</sup>, but from what port, or in what vessel he sails I do not learn, nor can I learn what is become of Mr. Adams or Mr. Ford. Dr. F——'s appointment as sole minister took place in September ; thus Mr. Adams has been left ever since unnoticed, which appears unaccountable and very surprising.\* It seems the Prince of Orange is

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\* "The alderman is recalled, or rather dismissed. One resolution of Congress was to recall him and Mr. Izard, and this was followed by another that they need not return; so that they are properly dismissed, and their commissions totally vacated. Prince Arthur will be left unrecalled and unemployed, so that

determined that the Dutch trade shall not have unlimited convoys. This business must come to something serious at last. Pray enquire and let me know what writer in French gives the best account of the French negotiations with Holland, and their Wars from the treaty of Westphalia in 1648, to the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, particularly during the period of the famous Pensionary John De Witt : for I do not know any English book that treats fully of the points. You never yet told me who first put into the hand of 100 the copy of what was done at Aix.\* I should like to know what additions or alterations are made.

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TO ARTHUR LEE.

F—T, 14 June [1779].

The vessel is gone, for *Saint Eustatia*. £150 sterling is *incurred*. 170 has *paid* more than his *share*. He wants £200 *Sterling*. Prepare for this on which you will hear farther in a little time.

Mr. Stockton now at the Hague intends to cross

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the family compact will be totally broken. If Roger could be disposed of in a similar way, with one or two more, all might yet go tolerably well. But of late a minority, and that a small one, has been able to oppose successfully any vote, and often to carry it in Congress against a large majority of the members. This is certainly a solecism in the political world." ¶ *Silas Deane to his brother*, 16 June, 1779.

\* The treaty of Lee with Neufville.

the sea soon, and wishes much to be charged with your dispatches if you have any to send—Indeed, he would wait some time for them. His address is Chez Madame la Veuve Loder, à la Haye, and if Mr. Pringle has left you, you can send Mr. S. a letter or two of introduction by the post, as I mentioned to Mr. Izard the 5th. instant. You will oblige me by sending a letter or two of introduction to Mr. Stockton, if you have no public dispatches to send.

Mr. Sayre is at Amsterdam which is all I hear of him, except that he had the command at Copenhagen of as much money as he chose. How he obtained this I know not.\* The 7th. instant another vessel arriv'd from Virginia at Amsterdam, but she sail'd before the one that bro't the account of the Victory gain'd in Georgia. There is now 4 or 5 American vessels at Amsterdam, some of which stand a good chance to get safe. Pray tell me the date of Loudoun's last letter, and also particularly the date of my letters that R. H. L. acknowledges to have received, for what you wrote me before must be a mistake. As the business with P[etrie]†

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\* Sayre had written to Franklin for employment, but the Dr. replied that it was not in his power to give him "any employ worth your accepting." *Franklin to Sayre*, 31 March, 1779.

† "As this Mr. Petrie is a stock jobber himself, and united with those Americans here who are in the same line, I imagine, that the having imputed the intelligence to my Brother, will

must be decided somewhere in this country, there can be no after claps, nor subsequent testimony necessary. Therefore what *A. Lee* mentions about that does not hold; however, if he sees any impropriety in his being present, he had better not attend. Mr. Pringle\* would surely be a very proper person, if he is in the way, as I suppose 172 was shy and declared off. The 3 following things I must beg you to get immediately:

1st. 172's state of what he says is the fact, in writing and signed by him.

2d. to ascertain whether S. P[etrie] had not the same disorder on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May that he has since complain'd of.

3d. A copy of what Sam. Wharton gave to Mr. Izard denying what had been imputed to him relative to stock jobbing.

172 should state how the letter was signed and to whom it was directed.

The whole of the business when fully and fairly

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appear upon enquiry to have been originally a trick of these people, such as is very common in the Alley, which Mr. Deane has converted into a criminal accusation against me." *Arthur Lee to the President of Congress, 26 April, 1779.* Petrie refused to reply to William Lee's demand, and was promptly challenged. The challeuge was accepted, and a place near Valenciennes named for the meeting. Lee, accompanied by Mr. Pollard and Dr. Bush, was there on the day, but Petrie did not appear.

\* John Julius Pringle.

stated, so far from being criminal, is in my opinion at least innocent, if not commendable, but the wretched junto by mentioning a little, omitting the most material parts, adding a good deal of untruth, and insinuating a great deal more, endeavor by such vile tricks to support their horrid plots. I pray you to tell me if the Baron De Breteuil from Vienna, is come to Paris. Mr. Grand, being his banker, can tell you. Is Mr. Adams and Mr. Ford gone, and in what ships?

Our dear little patriot Brutus now rests in Peace. His time here was very unpleasant, but I trust he has amends now. His mother feels his loss. Best compliments to Mr. I——d and family, and love to Ludwell. Farewell.

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TO HENRY LEE.

FRANKFORT IN GERMANY, 14 June, 1779.

*Dear Sir:*

I had the pleasure of writing to you pretty fully the 7th inst., relative to your bill on me in favor of Capt. Robinson, since which, I received your favor of the 27<sup>th</sup> of last February, wherein you state the injury you would sustain by receiving your debt in Virginia in paper @ 33½ difference of exchange. How much greater injury then shall I sustain by being obliged to receive several thousand pounds of sterling debts at the same rate. As for instance

your brother, y<sup>e</sup> Squire, owes me £200 sterling for money advanced long before my debt to you commenced. I owe you fifty odd pounds sterling. Now supposing I am to receive my debt in paper, and pay you in Europe, it will take the Squire's £200 sterling debt and about £30 sterling more to pay you your fifty odd pounds sterling in Europe. So much for y<sup>e</sup> Justice of my paying what I owe with cash in Europe, while by laws made by yourselves, I am obliged to receive paper for what is due to me. One word only on the impossibility of paying in Europe, which has been fully explained in my letter of the 7th, to which I will only add, that the commissions I have hitherto received for doing the public business for two years past does not amount to seventy pounds sterling. \* \* \*

You can hardly want any reply from me to Mr. Silas Deane's libel, since I see a very sufficient one in y<sup>t</sup> Virginia Gazette of March 5, under the signature of Detector, which it would appear Mr. Purdie has inserted with some reluctance. What Detector says relative to me is perfectly true, but he might have gone much further, and said that Congress in February, 1778, put the superintendence of their commercial affairs in Europe under the care of the Commissioners in France, and that Dr. Franklin, as *sole* minister Plenipotentiary in France, is now exercising that authority alone. Indeed the only thing like a charge of criminality

that Mr. Deane mentions against me, viz., of my bargaining with the commercial agents appointed by me to receive a share of the commissions they charged for doing the public business, is proved to be totally false and groundless by certificates from those agents, already sent to Congress; and I have also proved that Mr. Williams, whom Mr. Deane praises so much, made the very bargain with Mr. Thos. Morris, relative to the public business, that Mr. Deane charges me with, which bargain between Mr. Morris and Mr. Williams was approved by Mr. Deane. Congress has my answer in full, but I can't help observing that this very insignificant character could never have occasioned any ferment, if unhappily there had not been too much combustible matter ready to take fire from the least spark. Whether the guineas of the enemy have worked this effect, time will show; as to myself, I am perfectly easy, being conscious of having served my country and its cause with strict fidelity and disinterested zeal; and before the enemies of our name have a right to clamor, let them show what profit or gain any of us have made at the public expences. The fact is, that the Tories ever have and always will hate the Whigs, and those Whigs that have been most active and constant in their country's cause, will be the first objects of Tory Vengeance. My fervent wish is, to see all private animosity give way to Love of our Country, and that

every heart and hand may be united in defence of its liberties and independence, which our enemies are working as hard to destroy now as they ever did. \* \* \*

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TO CAPTAIN JOSIAH ROBINSON.

FRANKFORT IN GERMANY, 14 June, 1779.

\* \* \* It would be a sensible satisfaction to me if I could give you the least useful information relative to the prize money of Capt. Lambert Wickes. 'Tis true I did endeavor to get some account of his prizes, but to little purpose; the first prizes Capt. Wickes made, were all in the hands of Mr. Thos. Morris, and his agents, but I never could find any regular or the least intelligible accounts kept by Mr. Morris relative to these prizes, or any thing else. The second prizes Capt. Wickes made were in company with Cpts. Nicholson and Johnson; as there were many of them, and it was supposed they were valuable, Mr. Deane tho't proper to appoint Mr. Jonathan Williams to take the sale of these prizes out of the hands of Mr. T. Morris. This, as might naturally be expected, created great confusion in the business, Mr. Morris getting possession of several of the prizes, and Mr. Williams of others, one of which was a very valuable, well found, and almost new brig. Each of these gentlemen, I suppose, sold what they got

possession of, but I could never get the least account of their proceedings from either of them. Mr. Jonathan Williams, I believe, is still at Nantes, and also Mr. John Ross, who as attorney for Mr. R. Morris, of Philadelphia, has possession of all the books and papers of the late Mr. Thos. Morris. To these gentlemen, then, you can apply for the accounts you wish. \* \* \*

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TO \_\_\_\_\_

17 June, 1779.

*Dear Sir:*

The cruel and unmerited treatment that you have received not only from those who you have uniformly endeavored to serve, renders an apology unnecessary for the proposition I am now going to make you; but I will premise that it gives me a solid pleasure in reflecting that I have in some degree the power of showing you the gratitude I feel for your unwearied services in the cause of Liberty, and the general rights of mankind. That the success of the horrid and savage war, which Lord Bute, his pupil, and his minions are carrying on against America must inevitably put an end to the remaining liberties of Englishmen, is a truth now so clear to the commonest capacity, that it is impossible to suppose your penetrating mind has not viewed it in this light long ago; and tho' that

kind of antipathy between a Frenchman and Englishman which was commenced and has for a long series of time been cultivated with so much art, that it has now almost become a natural passion in ordinary men, your liberal mind and good sense must despise such weak prepossessions, and induce you to look on all mankind as that are occupied in a commendable and glorious cause, as your friends, and worthy of every aid in your power to give them; at least, while they are so employed. For this reason I presume you can have no objection to undertake to give me regularly the information I want, if it is in your power to procure it. I wish, Sir, to have the earliest advice of all the determinations and designs of the British Secret Cabinet, of every plan of operation against America and her allies, as soon as it is concerted, or even proposed, with an exact account of all the measures and force that is planned to carry the operations into execution. An exact and immediate account of every expedition or attack that is designed against America or her allies, with the force proposed to execute them. The secret instructions given to the Commanders by sea and land, as well as to Ministers and Governors abroad. Every secret negotiation that may be proposed, or attempted to be carried on with foreign powers. The *real* contents of the despatches received from their foreign ministers, from their commanders by sea

and land and governors abroad. In short I wish to have immediate and accurate intelligence of every movement in the British Secret Cabinet, and of all secret intelligence that may be conveyed there from every quarter. In the prosecution of this plan, particular attention will be necessary to the Admiralty and Secretaries of State's offices, tho' perhaps if a key cou'd be found to the Secret Cabinet itself, it will be the shortest way of going to work, as well as the surest. The vague reports in the public papers, and even what is going on in the ports and dock yards, are not of such moment as to require great attention, unless in particular cases, where there may be a collateral proof of the soundness of the secret information.

In order to enable you to execute this plan, I will engage to furnish you with £200 sterling every quarter of a year, and besides, when the importance of the intelligence requires it, you may send an express to some part of the continent, as shall be hereafter pointed out, the expence of which express shall be repaid to you, exclusive of the £200 p. quarter, the time of which will commence from the date of your answer saying that you will undertake this business, and the first £200 shall be remitted as soon as possible after the receipt of the first secret intelligence you shall communicate. If you undertake this business, your answer need only say, "I have received a letter of date —, the

contents of which are agreeable and shall be complied with." Direct this to "Mr. Thos. Tomlin," put this under a cover directed thus "A Mons<sup>r</sup> Richards, chez Mess. Frederic Miller et fils, Nego-ciants, Frankfort sur Maine," and send it by the common post via Ostende. I believe it will be necessary to frank this letter in London.

I have taken proper measures that this letter shall get safe to your hands without being opened, which may occasion its being longer than the usual time per post on the passage, and when I write hereafter by the post, it will be in such a manner that if opened no danger or inconvenience whatever shall happen to you. On your part you will take such precautions as prudence shall require, but I think it may not be amiss to give you an alphabet, with the use of which you may write by the post, without danger of discovery

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z a b c d e f g h

In this alphabet use the letters (when writing) of the second line to mean the letters of the first line, and when reading, suppose the letters of the second line are always used for the letters directly above them in the first line. As for instance, King of France may be written thus sgvownnzivkin, and sometimes to render the decyphering almost impracticable & and & may occasionally be introduced between the letters in the same word, and are to

have no meaning. Knowing the conveyance to be safe, I have written freely and fully; nothing remaining to be added but directions how to address your letters of information by the Post, and where to send the express when one is necessary, all which I can do by the ordinary post, as soon as I know your determination, in such terms that nobody but yourself shall understand, even if it should be opened, of which at present there is no great danger. \* \* \*

I think the orthodox creed of every true Englishman should now be, success to the Enemy, until our liberties are secured, our Constitution reform'd, and Scotch tyrants brought to condign Punishment. The immortal Hampden, &c., aided the Scotch, then called the natural enemies of England, to begin the War against the tyrant Charles the 1st., and the godlike Russell and Sydney leagued with France to save their country from the attempts of the abandoned Charles 2, and infamous James 2, to destroy it.

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TO SAMUEL W. STOCKTON.

FRANKFORT, 17 June, 1779.

*Dear Sir:*

I am much obliged to you for your favor of the 11th, and the intelligence it contains. You had from me long ago the outlines of 100's schemes and

wishes; it is most probable that he will be disappointed, for y<sup>e</sup> reasons you mention, and I shall be greatly deceived in y<sup>e</sup> men if he is not left in the Lurch by those who have held up to him the flattering prospect. The intelligence about Ireland appears to me a visionary romance, not worthy of the smallest credit; if it was true, he that could divulge it in y<sup>e</sup> present state of the business as supposed, or even c<sup>d</sup> give y<sup>e</sup> most distant hint about it, must be either a Fool, or a knave, perhaps both; but being as I conceive altogether a Fiction, it appears to me an edged Tool, that is more likely to do mischief to him that plays with it, than any body else; however, it may be adviseable for you to get the precise words of the Letter, its date, by whom written and to whom addressed, all these I should wish to know. I could wish also to have it clearly ascertained y<sup>t</sup> the K. of Prussia has agreed to furnish IN *the French seaports* wood for building ships, when it was made, and how long it is to continue. If 'tis certain, perhaps our business may bear pressing home in the north. Letters in this town from good hands speak that Spain would make her declaration to ye British ministry on the 11th or 12 Inst<sup>t</sup> of openly joining France, and consequently America. If this has been done, you must know it with certainty by the time this reaches you, but, from the profound and universal Lethargy that has seized the King, M[inistr]y, and

People of England, I don't think this will awaken them.—The cannon must rattle in their ears at St. James, to bring them to their senses. We are not in luck, or else by one stroke the war might have been ended—Arbuthnot and Darby with 15 sail of the Line, the N. Y., Quebec and Newfoundland Fleet, about 400 sail, went out of the channel the 30th of May, and D'Orvilliers with 28 sail of the Line, besides Frigates, sailed from Brest the 3d. of this month. Had he sailed the same day that Arbuthnot did from Torbay, they might easily have met, when the business must have ended the war.

Deane's libel has occasion'd much heat in America. No dispatches from C—, but it is said y<sup>e</sup> late President Laurens, and Mr. Penn, members of C— for N. Carolina, and one of Mr. R. M[orris]s partizans, have had a duel about their political disputes. This is much to be lamented; however, I still hope they will not neglect the main business and prepare a proper reception for Master Clinton when he attempts to steal out of his hive. You may see in y<sup>e</sup> London Even<sup>g</sup> [Post?] the beginning of this month, an insolent Letter to Gov<sup>r</sup> Livingston from C—! Common Sense has given Mr. Deane several repeated chastisements which you may see in the Remembrancers, if you can get them. \* \* \*

TO ARTHUR LEE.

[FRANKFORT ON THE MAINE],

20 June, [1779.]

Lord Granville, the wisest man and ablest minister of his time used to say, that he did not think any intelligence worth attention that was not accompanied with dates. Neither the date of Philalethe's letter or the date of its publication are given. I wish you had mentioned T. Digges' direction, for I have written months ago two letters directed as he desir'd, neither of which he has answer'd; therefore, I suppose he has not receiv'd them.\*

I do not see of what great use the certified copies will be to meet this vague charge. As the name of no particular person is mentioned, and the word *Friends* is used, so that these wretches may say, their denial only goes to Mr. T.†—Nor does this agent of Mr. Williams mention by whom or where in France this *creditable report* was made; therefore it must come to a simple denial on my part, until they are more explicit and come to particulars, when they may be convicted of falsehood and defamation. That such a report may have been in the circle of the Junto at Nantes is possible enough, but the truth of that report I most posi-

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\* Digges was then in England.

† Major Thornton.

tively deny. Indeed, the whole of the letter consider'd and Cutler's confession of his agency, is sufficient for any impartial man to see the falsehood and intent of the charge. This plot is what I expected in consequence of the mortal offence the Treaty with H[olland] gave at P[ass]y, and you see how soon the enemies were set to work, to prevent C[ongress] from authorizing me to conclude that business. If C. will be duped by such flimsy artifices, there is no human prudence or rectitude of conduct on my part that can prevent it. This credible report smells too strong of Mess. Williams, Johnson, and Ridley and Ross, to doubt of the manufactory. Mr. Jenings came about the same time from London as Mr. Ridley. Does he know anything of this business? I can't help thinking the determination on Deane's affairs will be different from what F. L. L. apprehends, for I greatly fear the Cabal have deeper designs, viz., of selling our country as the Scotch did their king for English gold, and a flagrant injustice for D. would ruin their main design, as it might open the eyes of the world before things were ripe for execution.

We have London papers to the 12th, in which there is nothing new that is material. Poor Conyngham of the Revenge is at last taken and carryed to New York. Will Mess. R[oss?] and H[olker?] claim the property now?

I observe what is said about M. M—t, on which

you will hear farther another time. We expect every post will now bring something interesting from your quarter. We send you our love and best wishes. Adieu. (No signature.)

P. S. By the time you receive this old D[umas] will be in *Paris* or at P[ass]y with a *treaty* with *Holland*; in which it is said some trivial alterations are made in what was done before, but with no further confirmation or authority.

TO SAMUEL W. STOCKTON.

FRANKFORT, 20 June, 1779.

*Dear Sir:*

An anonymous writer, under y<sup>e</sup> Signature of Philalethes has published in the Pennsylvania paper, the following Letter:

BOSTON, 21 November, 1778.

*To the Hon. Silas Deane, Esq<sup>r</sup>:*

Sir, Agreeable to Mr. Williams's request I have to inform you that I arrived from France with his accounts to lay before Congress, with a letter and other papers to them, and two letters for you, which I am to deliver to you; that honor I shall have as soon as the weather will permit. At the time I left France (the 28th Sept.), it was credibly reported that Wm. Lee, Esq., then alderman of London, had wrote his friends there, that he should not resign his gown, as he intended to return and take it again, and convince the world that he had while in the service of America

been acting for the good of England as well as of the United States.

I am with respect, &c.,  
SAMUEL CUTLER.

You will no doubt agree with me that so vague a charge, and coming professedly from an Agent of Mr. Deane's party and so foolishly brought in neck and shoulders as to show clearly that it was coin'd to answer y<sup>e</sup> momentary occasion, cannot have the least weight on candid and impartial minds; but when people are heated, the most absurd and ridiculous fictions are sometimes by design, sometimes from blindness, taken for clear and decided truths. This Mr. Cutler I never before heard of, but he tells us himself that he is Mr. Williams's agent sent over by him to America to settle his Accounts with Congress—those accounts which my brother, A. Lee, would not settle in France, thinking them unjust and unwarrantable. Hence one cause of Enmity against me. Another cause you know, and may remember that I told you when we were together in Paris in September last about the T[reaty] with Holland, that I expected some attempt would be made to injure me in consequence of having succeeded in that business and you see I was not mistaken, for the plot was lay'd before the month ended. Tis not easy to bring direct proof in contradiction to the false charge meant to be insinuated by this letter of Mr.

Cutler's, or to convict him of being a false reporter; for he does not mention the name of any one in France, who made this *credible report*, nor does he give the name of any *one of my friends* in London to whom I wrote; therefore such an insinuation can only be met by a declaration from those who being most with me, are the best judges of the probability of the truth of it. If you have no objection I think something like the following by way of Letter to a person in America, would answer the purpose:

*Sir:*

The following letter having been published in the Philadelphia papers by a writer under the signature of Philalethes, viz: (here should follow y<sup>e</sup> letter). Altho' I am no partizan, nor ever will be a party man, yet justice and truth call upon me to say that y<sup>e</sup> charge meant to be convey'd against M<sup>r</sup> W. Lee by the above letter, is totally in my opinion void of foundation. I lived with M<sup>r</sup> Lee in Germany from June, 1778, to March, 1779, during which time his whole conduct and conversation was directly contrary to such an idea as returning to the exercise of the office of Alderman of London, which I know he could not do, after what he had done for America, unless like a suicide, he had chose to hang himself. As a convincing proof that the charge against Mr. Lee is unjust, I can assure you that to my personal knowledge he sent to London in November last a formal resignation of his Aldermanship.

This you are at liberty to make as public as you please.  
I am, etc.

Such a letter sent to Dr. Witherspoon, and enclosed open to Dr. Wm. Shippen, Jun<sup>r</sup>, of Philadelphia, to deliver, by two at least of the American vessels now at Amsterdam, may answer the purpose of defeating this calumny. I have only to add that if you have any kind of repugnance to this measure, I do not by any means wish you to take it, nor would I have you on any account say one word relative to me, that you do not most sincerely believe to be just and true. \* \*

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TO RALPH IZARD.

FRANKFORT, 20 June, 1779.

*Dear Sir:*

I wrote to you the 5th, which you ought to have received when you favored me with yours of 11th, for which I hold myself much indebted, and must again say that your letters are so explicit and satisfactory that they give me more solid information than any correspondence I have. I have the highest opinion of F. L. Lee's clear and penetrating judgment of men and things, yet I can't help thinking with you about the strength of Mr. D's party, unless they have at bottom the design of selling our Country to our Enemies, and they may fear that a hasty determination in favor of Mr. D.

may open the eyes of the people before their plans are ripe for execution. Whatever is the real fact, the consequences I am afraid will be fatally injurious to America, unless M. de La Luzerne gets over in time to prevent it. It gives me much pleasure to find that your judgment of that gentleman corresponds with y<sup>e</sup> character I have of him from various quarters where he is known, and I hope you and my brother have both given him and Mr. De Marbois particular letters of recommendation.

We have London papers to the 12<sup>th</sup>, but not one word of the Spanish declaration, nor even a rumor that it was expected. Had Mons<sup>t</sup>. D'Orviliers sailed from Brest the same day, and with the same wind that carried Arbuthnot and Hardy from Torbay, they might easily have met, when at one stroke the war would have been ended, without the assistance of Spain. There was timely notice of Arbuthnot's situation and design, but I think we have not hitherto been in luck with our naval operations. Don't you think that everything relative to America had better be sent in the first instance to Millar, for the London Evening, than to Almon? This man, besides that he is not in my opinion friendly to our cause, plays so many tricks as a publisher, that the intelligence is seldom so public as it ought to be. You say our letter about Folger's despatches is perfectly satisfactory, but how? is the iniquity cleared up, or the thief dis-

covered and held up, as he ought to be, to public infamy? You have no doubt seen Phila letters (the date of which, or that part of the Philadelphia Paper it is in I do not know) with Mr. Sam<sup>l</sup> Cutler's letter to Mr. D. Who this Mr. Cutler is, I know not; unless he is a clerk of Mr. Williams's, nor where he picked up what he calls his *credible report*, unless it was among the Junto at Nantes. I foresaw that the deadly offence which the negotiation with H[ollan]d gave at P[ass]y, would make me a marked and odious man; I said when at Paris on that business in September last, that some plot against me would certainly be contrived, and you see it was so before the month expired; and one obvious design of this report was to prevent C. from intrusting me with the conclusion of the business with Holland. But Mr. Cutler's letter is sufficient of itself to convince any impartial man of Common Sense of its falsehood and folly. In the first place I must have been a perfect idiot to have wrote that I intended to do that which all the world, as well as myself knows I cannot do; secondly, if I had wrote what Mr. Cutler so obligingly imputes to me, to several persons, for he says friends, his *credible reporters* might easily have mention'd the name at least of one of those Friends, when it would be very easy to have convicted them of falsehood and defamation; however, it is some comfort that I have a copy of my resignation dated the 13th of Nov.,

1778, and Mr. Stockton copied my letter to the Ward on that occasion, of both which you have a copy inclosed, and of which you will please to make mention in your first letter to America. For my own part, I am of opinion 'tis not an improper use of time to be employed in clearing up the infinity of aspersions that flow from the fertile Junto; every moment should be employed in searching out their villainy, and guarding against their machinations to ruin our country. As to my post, poor Devils, they are heartily welcome to it, but with all their creative faculties I am much mistaken if they do not find it a barren and unproductive occupation. \* \* \*

P. S. Pray send me a copy of what you had from Sam. Wharton relative to the stock jobbing business.

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RALPH IZARD AND ARTHUR LEE TO WILLIAM LEE.

PARIS, June 22d, 1779.

*Sir:*

We had the honor of receiving your favor of the —, in which you ask our advice relative to an application to the King of Prussia to comply with his promise, made through his Minister, Baron de Schulenburg, "that he would acknowledge the independence of the United States as soon as France had done so," and whether it would be proper to change the channel of application from Baron de Schulenburg to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

It is with great pleasure that we contribute whatever is in our power to assist your judgment in what so materially concerns the public good.

We are of opinion that in the present state of expectancy from Spain, it will be prudent to wait till her example also, has given encouragement to the Court of Berlin, and contributed to counteract the motives from Russia, which withhold that Court from pursuing its interest and inclination in openly espousing our cause. That when it may be proper to move the question, the promises should be touched with delicacy, by stating that the good will towards us, which the King had formerly declared, having been suspended in its operation by the war in Germany, you hope that their objection being now removed, he will not delay to give the world a decided proof of his sentiments, in the acknowledgment of the independency of the United States of America, which cannot fail, by the weight of such an example, to stop the further wanton effusion of blood.

As the King of Prussia is in fact his own Minister, we should imagine that it might have a bad effect to change from Baron de Schulenburg, whom he seems to have appointed to transact this particular business. But in this, a knowledge of the actual situation of that Court must decide, and of that we are not informed.

We wish you every success in this important negotiation, and are with the greatest esteem, dear sir, yours, &c.,

RALPH IZARD,  
ARTHUR LEE.

TO RICHARD HENRY LEE.

FRANKFORT IN GERMANY, 24 June, 1778.

*My dear Brother:*

'Tis a long while indeed since I have received any letter from you, tho' I hear that our brother at Paris has received a letter from you dated in February, and another from our brother F. L. L. dated y<sup>e</sup> 22 April last. I know little of their contents, except that you both had a design of quitting C.— Whatever you do in this respect I cannot find fault with, because I am so well satisfied of y<sup>e</sup> good sense, solidity of judgment, and fixed attachment to y<sup>e</sup> cause of Liberty and our Country, which you both possess, that I am sure you would not take such a step unless you found it impracticable to do y<sup>e</sup> good you wish, and that it was necessary to do so for your own honor; but I must lament from the bottom of my soul that such a necessity should exist. The imprudence, the folly, the barefaced contradictions and falsehoods, so conspicuous in the publications of Mr. Deane and his partizans, would not in temperate and well regulated times, have afforded conversation for a day: and his daring abuse and insult to Congress would have met with the censure and punishment that it so obviously deserves. From what causes the present temper arises, you on y<sup>e</sup> spot can determine better than me at a distance; for I am not willing to credit Gov<sup>r</sup> Johnstone's assertion that his pecuniary and *prom-*

isso~~r~~ operations last year have produced their effect; but let y<sup>e</sup> cause be what it will, our dear Country will feel at least y<sup>e</sup> bad effect from it of this campaign, which I sincerely hope will not turn out as our Enemies expect. You and our dear brother have certainly reflected, that in all cases that ever happened in the world, in y<sup>e</sup> least similar to the present case of America, plotting and wicked genius's have started up who, by cunning, treachery and villainy, have too frequently deprived their Country of that blessing which everything has been risqued to preserve. The first step always was to traduce the first leaders, and endeavor by every possible means to get them out of the service of their Country, that their wicked game may be played without obstruction; for these considerations I shall still hope that you and our brother, who stood foremost in the risque of life and property, to save our country from the cruelties of the British Tyrant, will still persevere in endeavoring to rescue her from the infamous designs of her present more insidious and not less dangerous internal enemies.

With respect to myself, I am perfectly indifferent about what may be the determination of C., for I know that my *real Honor* cannot be tainted but by a bad action, committed by myself. If I am relieved from my present employment, I shall have more leisure, and perhaps more opportunity of

searching out and exposing to public view the  
particular designs of some people against their country. If I should be exonerated unless I receive the  
franks of Congress for the negotiations with Hol-  
land I shall certainly resign altho' my care and  
solicitude for yr general welfare of my Country will  
not be in yr least abated. I have sent by two con-  
vergences a full answer to Mr. Denne's letter pub-  
lished the 1st December, and a memorial he gave  
to Congress the 11 Novr so far as they relate to  
me; at the same time have exposed to view some  
of his plots and those of Dr. F. It would seem by  
some American papers that what they make the  
most noise about respecting me is relative to the  
Aldermanship. The Common people in America  
may possibly not know it, but it is hardly credible  
that D. and his Judds should be so dreadfully igno-  
rant, as not to know, that after having been pub-  
licly in yr service of C., it is not in my power  
(whatever might have been my inclination) to re-  
turn to ye exercise of yr Aldermanship of London.  
These brawlers will be hushed, when it is publicly  
known, that above two years ago I quitted the Al-  
dermanship of London, to enter into the service of  
my country, and finding that they would not pro-  
ceed to choose another alderman in my room, I  
wrote to the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen in  
November last, desiring that they would proceed  
to have another Alderman elected. This will prove

what credit is due to Mr. Deane's agents, as well as the folly and wickedness of Mr. Williams' clerk, Mr. Cutler.

The commission of 5 per cent. charged by y<sup>e</sup> agents appointed by me and Mr. Williams charging only 2 per cent., seems to be dropped by y<sup>e</sup> Junto; I suppose, because they see from Mr. Williams's accounts that he has charged 5 per cent., which he did in consequence of an agreement he made with Mr. T. Morris, which agreement Mr. Deane knew of and approved before he went from France. What wretches then are these people?\*

You may see in Mr. Deane's letter of the 5th of December, he insinuated that our brother, A. L., gave information of the signing the Treaty with France the very night it was signed, and then gives the copy of a letter which he says a *gentleman of character* told him, his correspondent in England had seen. By an intercepted letter of Mr. Deane's since publish'd in the New York Gazette, it appears that this *gentleman of character* was a Mr. Sam<sup>l</sup> Petrie, the son of a Scotch merchant in London, and also a great intimate with

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\* "Your testimony with regard to Mr. Wm. Lee is fully sufficient to remove the suspicion of his sharing in your commission. I mentioned it not as a charge against him, but as an excuse for you; five per cent. being, as I understood, more than double of what is usual." *Franklin to Schweighauser, 17 September, 1779.*

Fordyce the Banker, that made so much noise in London by his Bankruptcy in 1772.\* This Mr. S. P., after making his father a bankrupt, and ruining the whole family by his extravagance, &c., for which reason to this moment he has not been able to obtain his certificate, came to Paris in 1777, where he has lived ever since in a pretty expensive stile; by what means the world in general does not know. He soon became a retainer to Mr. Deane and his party, from mutual motives of Interest, which were pretty evident to those who knew their objects. Mr. S. P., on being questioned by our brother in Paris relative to this business, has deny'd it positively so far as it relates to him, but as I am absent, he has changed his ground and

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\* The London *Chronicle* of 11 June, 1772, announced that "Mr. F\_\_\_\_\_, the banker, who disappeared early yesterday morning, with an immense sum of money, we are informed, has not been heard of." He was said to have remained with his clerks all the preceding night examining his accounts, became convinced of his bankruptcy, borrowed largely upon the credit of the house, composed of Henry Neale, William James, Alexander Fordyce and Richard Down, of Threadneedle Street Bank, and left the kingdom. His flight was followed by a run upon other private bankers, and many failures resulted. The deficiency was stated to be some £34,000, and his wife sacrificed her property to make it good, but the firm was gazetted as bankrupt, June 20, 1772, and Fordyce's real debts amounted to upwards of £200,000. He was receiver-general of the land-tax for Scotland, and the government claimed his estate at Roehampton.

says now that he understood the letter was written by me ; therefore to stop the operations of y<sup>e</sup> Junto on this head, I will state the fact so far as I am concerned, which you may make public whenever you see occasion.

When I left England in June, 1777, Edmund Jenings, Esq., of Maryland, stayed there. This gentleman's attachment and services to his country and its cause, are too well known to you, as well as to many gentlemen in Maryland, particularly to Mr. Carroll, who was in Congress, and Mr. Carmichael, now in Congress, for me to mention them here. Mr. Jenings and myself kept up a correspondence together, the whole object of which was the service of America. Some time after the Peace was signed I wrote to Mr. Jenings, letting him know that our business was finished, in such terms (not those which Mr. Deane has mentioned) that no person breathing but Mr. Jenings, or with his interpretation, could understand what was meant; and besides, the letter was signed by a fictitious name and addressed to a fictitious person. This letter was sent by the common post, and, as a proof that it was not sent the same night that the Treaty was signed, the 6th of February, 1778, was Friday, and the post from Paris to London only goes twice in the week, on Mondays and Thursdays, at 10 o'clock in the morning. This is the plain matter of fact, which is essentially different

from one of Mr. Deane's household writing over to London, *before* the Treaty was signed, and mentioning y<sup>e</sup> precise day on which the Treaty was to be signed; desiring his correspondent to make his speculations accordingly. Of this truth Congress must before now be in possession of proof. This fact proves the true motive for Mr. Deane's talking to those who were not of his cabinet, about keeping y<sup>e</sup> business of y<sup>e</sup> Treaty a secret; it served also another end, being made use of by him and Dr. Franklin as a pretext why Mr. Izard and myself should not be communicated with on the subject, and why we should not be furnished with copys of the treatys, agreeable to the order of Congress. I always tho't, and still think, that if Mr. Gerard did mention anything about secrecy in y<sup>e</sup> latter stage of this business, the thing was suggested to him by Mr. D. or Dr. F., for the reasons above mentioned. However, 'tis a notorious fact, that y<sup>e</sup> Treaty, its commencement, progress, and conclusion, was a subject of general conversation in Paris, nor was it possible to be otherwise when the proceedings were so extraordinary and open to numbers.

About 10 or 14 days ago, Mons<sup>t</sup> Le Chevalier de la Luzerne sailed from France for Boston, to replace Mons<sup>t</sup> Gerard; by him you will know that Spain has at last determined to take an active part with us, and that a really formidable fleet sailed

from Brest y<sup>e</sup> 4th Inst., to join y<sup>e</sup> Spanish fleet that is still more formidable, from Cadiz and Ferrol. The first object of their operations is still a secret. The British grand fleet is not, that we know of here, yet gone from Portsmouth. Adm<sup>l</sup> Arbuthnot sailed out of y<sup>e</sup> channel the 30th of May, with 5 ships of the Line, the Experiment of 50 guns, some frigates, and about 300 transports and merchantmen—The latter for Quebec and New York, the transports with near 8000 troops, and provisions, for New York. Sir James Wallace in the Experiment, with 4 or 5 frigates, are to cruize all the summer from the capes of Delaware to Georgia, to intercept the commerce, while Clinton is to pursue his operations by land with the aid of his savage allies under Butler. All these attempts I hope you will be prepared to meet, for, now Spain has declared, it does not seem within the chapter of possibilities, that our Enemies can be able to carry on another campaign in America, since they have not one ally in Europe, but on the contrary, have by their uncommon insolence and general piracy on all nations without distinction, made those who were formerly their most zealous friends, at this time their decided foes. Ireland is also on y<sup>e</sup> eve of a general revolution.

The Chevalier de la Luzerne and his secretary Mons. De Marbois, have so high a character wher-ever they are known, that I am sure you will find

them with sentiments and conduct such as you would wish them to be. This change proves the sincerity of the Court of Versailles, and it is much to be lamented that such a character had not been the first representative of his most Xtian majesty in America.

We have hardly got settled in this country from the late tremendous clamor of war, but in a few daies I expect to hear something decisive from Berlin relative to our affairs, which prevents my writing to C. by this uncertain conveyance; but I must say that in my opinion the King of Prussia, as well as y<sup>e</sup> H. of Austria, Holland, &c., will wait y<sup>e</sup> issue of y<sup>e</sup> present campaign, before they take a decided part with us. This you may be assured of, that y<sup>e</sup> more evidently America appears able to support herself, the sooner she will find friends in Europe, and I am of y<sup>e</sup> same opinion now as at the beginning of the contest, that our best security was, and is, in our own efforts, constancy and unanimity. With respect to Mr. D. and his partizans, I think the best way will be to expose their wicked plots and designs, without spending too much time in replying to the infinite number of falsehoods that they propagate, for every hour they coin something new in their fertile manufactory. . . . \*

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\* "Your city, since it has been honored with the residence of Mr. Deane, seems to have been the seat of confusion and dis-

TO RALPH IZARD.

FRANKFORT, 25 June, 1779.

\* \* \* The French captain's tale about ye' situation of affairs in South Carolina, does not seem very credible; they have in England letters and papers from New York to May 6th, and later, from whence it does not appear that they have ye' least idea of Prevost's being able to advance into South Carolina; on ye' contrary he must be distressed, as Hopkins with a squadron of frigates, had taken two transport ships laden with stores, provisions and

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cord, which I am not surprised at, for I believe if it were possible that he, or one or two more of his party, could get into Heaven itself, they would breed dissension and discord even there; however it is for the sake of humanity, for the sake of our country, much to be lamented that things have been in such a ferment, and ye' minds of men so heated by such an insignificant object as Mr. D., because from that source will flow all the miseries and calamities of the present campaign in America, which it is very certain our Enemies would never have undertaken, had they not been encouraged by what has passed among you last winter. That Providence which has hitherto so remarkably protected America from ye' attempts of her external enemies, will I hope still lend her benign influence to protect the heavenly cause of Liberty and America from the parricidal attempts of those, who now are aiming their secret and mortal stabs against ye' existence of both. The Whigs must all firmly unite, to save their country from ye' secretly united efforts of the public enemy without and ye' private enemy within." *William Lee to Dr. William Shippen,*  
24 June, 1779.

"I can't help expressing my indignation to see how much

presents to ye Indians, 3 brigs, and 2 schooners, with goods and provisions from New York to Georgia. Their greatest hopes seem to rest on their copper colorer'd allies, the Indians, who indeed may do a great deal of mischief. If they continue this horrid war, I think retaliation will be justifiable, and I am sure it is in y<sup>e</sup> power of America. St Johns in Newfoundland can burn, and y<sup>e</sup> Negroes in y<sup>e</sup> West Indies can cut a Scotchman's throat as well as an Indian savage can knock out y<sup>e</sup> brains of a helpless American infant.

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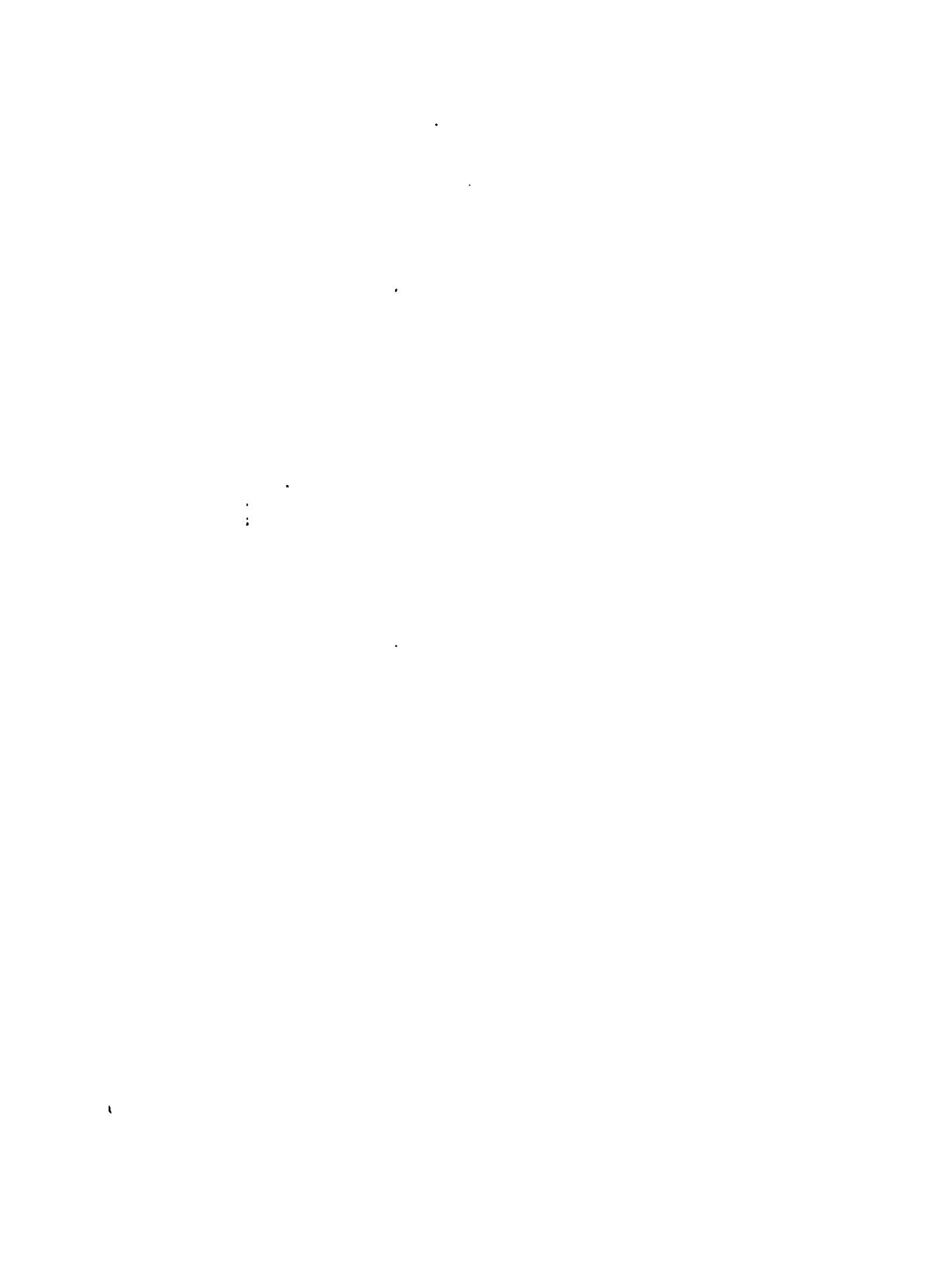
relyance our enemies have on y<sup>e</sup> effects of y<sup>e</sup> dissention their agents and emissaries have created in Congress. On a motion of Sir W. Meredith's, y<sup>e</sup> 11th inst. in the H. of C. leading to Peace with America, which was overruled, G. Johnstone said, he saw great hopes of y<sup>e</sup> Colonies returning *separately* to their dependence on G. B. The people were for it in general; and it was only y<sup>e</sup> Congress, who from ambition and selfish views were against it. Lord G. Germaine was in high spirits and bold, declared his aversion to treat with Congress, but his hearty desire to treat with the Provinces separately or any body of Americans; that y<sup>e</sup> King by the Prohibitory Act had authority to grant *Pardons*, &c., therefore there was no occasion for any farther Parliamentary authority. He knew from y<sup>e</sup> *best authority*, that the Congress were divided into parties; and at this hour, if it was not for the fear they stood in of Washington's army, a *part* of that Congress would offer terms to G. B. Thus you see, the old maxim, *divide et impera*, is still their sheet anchor, but God forbid that the Liberty and Independence of America should depend on y<sup>e</sup> Tyrant of G. B., or on the pleasure of W's army, or any army in the world." *William Lee to S. W. Stockton, 24 June, 1779.*

English papers to ye 15th, say nothing decisive about Spain, whose conduct to me has been, and is utterly inexplicable. I already set it down that all ye bluster will end in smoke, and nothing any way decisive be done. Poor America will alone feel the most dreadful horrors of war. \* \* \*

END OF VOL. II.









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